

**Re-MARKING PLACES:**

AN A/R/TOGRAPHY PROJECT

EXPLORING STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' SENSES OF SELF, PLACE AND COMMUNITY

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of

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**Dedication**



*To my husband, Fernandez Barrett—*

*I can't remember a time when you were not there!*

*To my mom, dad and grandmother—*

*for your unwavering love, prayers and support.*

*I LOVE YOU!*

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**Abbreviations**

R.O.S.E. - Reform of Secondary Education

C.S.E.C. - Caribbean Secondary Examination Council

N. C. E. A. - National Certificate of Educational Achievement

A. B. R. - Arts-based Research

P. B. E. - Place-based Education

C. P. O. P. - Critical Pedagogy of Place

E.R.O - Education Review office



### **Abstract**

The nurturance of creative capacity and cultural awareness have been identified as important 21<sup>st</sup> century concerns, given the ways that globalisation has challenged cultural diversity. This thesis explores the share that the art classroom, as a formative place, has in supporting such concerns. It specifically examines artmaking strategies that visual arts teachers may use to help adolescent students to develop and negotiate their senses of self, place and community. Held within this goal is the assumption that both student and teacher perspectives are important to this endeavor. This thesis, accordingly, draws upon empirical work undertaken with lower secondary school level visual art students in Christchurch, New Zealand and teacher-trainees in Kingston, Jamaica to explore this potential in multi-dimensional ways.

The research employs a qualitative, arts-based methodology, centred on the transformative capacity of ‘visual knowing’ to render this potential visible. Autobiography as a particular strand of arts-based methodology, served to also implicate my artist-researcher-teacher roles in the study to facilitate both reflection and reflexivity and to capture the complexity and dynamics of the study. Multiple case studies provided the contexts to furnish these possibilities, and to theorize the intrinsic qualities of each case, as well as the complementary aspects of the inquiry in depth. The conceptual framework that underpins this study draws widely on scholarship relating to contemporary artmaking practices, visual culture, culturally responsive and place-conscious pedagogical practices.

The research findings reveal that when the artmaking experience is framed around the personal and cultural experiences of the participants, both students and teachers participate in the enterprise meaningfully as co-constructors of knowledge. In this process, students develop the confidence to bring their unique feelings, experiences and understandings to the artmaking process, and develop a sense of ‘insideness’ that leads to strong senses of self,

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place and community. This also creates a space where the authentic interpretation of artmaking activities goes beyond the creation of borders around cultural differences, and instead generates multiple entry points for students to engage with information.

The findings also indicate that while the nature of artmaking is improvisatory and emergent, structure is an integral element in the facilitation of habits toward perception and meaning making. Accordingly, emphases on structured, open-ended artmaking experiences, framed aesthetically, as well as exposure to both the products and processes of contemporary art serve this endeavor. Artmaking boundaries and enabling structures also help to supplement this process.

Though this research is limited in scope (in terms of the community engagement), there exists evidence that collaboration with community resource persons enlarges students' conceptions of artmaking. It presents the potential to address broad issues of local and global import, which also have relevance for the ways students understand their relationships with the world. For researchers outside of the school and community culture however, this process requires close working relations with school personnel to ensure its effectiveness and to facilitate those school-community bridges. The undertaking is also best realized when participants have their own senses of its value, and, as such, are more inclined to participate.

A/r/tography, as an arts-based methodology presents much potential for examining the complexities of the artmaking experience. As a form of active inquiry it helps those who employ its features to be more attuned toward enquiry, their ways of being in the world, the ways the personal may be negotiated in a community of belonging, and the development of practices that address difference. This contributes to evolving and alternative research possibilities that value visual forms of 'knowing'.

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Finally, this thesis addresses the paucity of research on visual arts education at the secondary level, especially in the Jamaican context. A significant feature of this research is the evidence of its effectiveness with both lower secondary school students and teachers across geographical contexts. It therefore presents the potential for similar studies to be undertaken internationally. Given that the results are site specific however, it is recommended that the adaptation of the framework of this study for future purposes also respond to the specific realities of those contexts.

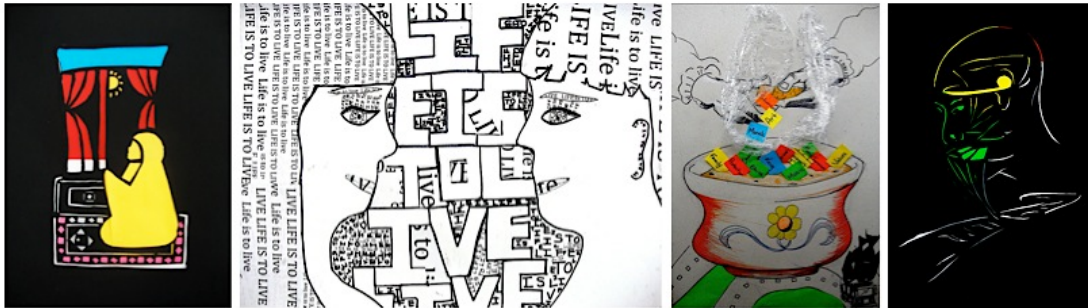
*Keywords: artmaking, a/r/tography, arts-based, place-based education, sense of self, sense of place, sense of community, place-based education, visual culture, critical pedagogy of place, culturally responsive pedagogy*

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## **SECTION ONE: FOUNDATIONS**

## Chapter One

### Opening Re-Marks: Introducing the Research



### Introduction

This research represents a general interest in the ways that artmaking is synonymous with meaning making, and the lens it provides to explore, process and share our relationships to the world. Specifically, the study examines the capacities held within the artmaking process to enable student negotiations of their senses of self, place and community, and draws on student and teacher perspectives to understand the dynamics involved more fully. The artworks above represent some of the ways in which the student and teacher-trainee participants in this study manifested this potential. The premise for this work leans on Cravey and Petit's (2012) assertion that "All individuals are already situated in place, and it is through our spatial and temporal experiences in places that we define, at least in part, who we are..." (p. 101).

Critical to this examination then, is an understanding of how the presumed realities of the artmaking experience might illuminate our understandings of how students 'place' themselves in the world. Implicated in this matrix is an inquiry into the ways that artmaking may be facilitated to enable students to make sense of their personal and collective experiences. Further, there is a consideration of the ways that the interrelationships between

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teacher, learner, learning environment and the knowledge produced, influence the way students' experience place. These concerns center the research.

Comprehensively, this study explores some of the ways in which the techniques, content, assumptions and contexts of visual arts education might illuminate the conditions needed for fostering meaning-making in our art classrooms. The ways in which students experience place is the meaning-making referent in this study and I am interested in how the strategies used in this study might expand the ways in which visual arts education is broadly conceived. Accordingly, the primary research question guiding this investigation is: "How can visual arts teachers use artmaking to help adolescent students to recognize, critically analyse and interpret their senses of self, place and community?"

The following sub-questions serve to investigate the main question in greater depth:

- a. How does the work undertaken in the visual arts classroom serve students in making sense of their individual and collective experiences?
- b. What are the artmaking conditions that are conducive to promoting student negotiation of their personal and cultural selves?
- c. How might a conception of artmaking as place-making re-mark the ways in which the field of visual arts education participates in global processes?

Table 1 below frames the research objectives of this study as procedural steps:

Table 1 Research Process Sequence

<b>Foundations</b>
Establish theoretical foundations and an inquiry structure for the study following a review and analysis of the salient literature.
Formulate the research problem, questions and objectives of the study.
Analyze visual arts curriculum documents for New Zealand and Jamaican secondary schools to frame the inquiry.
Develop a rationale for framing artmaking with place agendas to enrich cultural relevance in secondary schools.
<b>Implementation</b>
Select the research site, participants and methods.
Conduct the study.
<b>Evaluation</b>
Describe, interpret and evaluate the results of the study.
Generate conclusions, implications, and further questions based on the outcome of the analysis of this study.
<b>Application</b>
Generate recommendations for place-based art curriculum in secondary schools and suggest further research or actions to be taken.

## Background to the Research

The motivations behind this research are located in my professional field of visual arts education in Jamaica. My history as an arts educator spans approximately ten years of work at various levels, in formal and informal contexts, and in different capacities. In my role as a secondary school teacher, I taught the visual arts to students from grades seven through ten. This experience was spread across two contexts—an upgraded<sup>1</sup> high school and a traditional high school. A mosaic of inequalities set the experiences apart. These are described later in the chapter.

During this time I also marked Resource and Technology scripts for the national Junior High School Examinations, contributing further to my awareness of the disparities between these two school categorizations. Outside of these roles, I functioned as a private tutor to a student who was having difficulty with the formal art syllabus used at a secondary school, and I also instructed children in the visual arts at a private facility on weekends.

My experience at the tertiary level also spans two contexts. In the first, I worked at one of the major universities in Jamaica as the Cultural Coordinator of its Centre for the Arts. In this capacity, I was responsible for monitoring the cultural programmes (dance, drama, music, visual arts), for promoting income-generating activities, managing community outreach projects, and administering the extra-curricular visual arts programme. The Centre primarily served to provide the students with a ‘rounded’ and holistic university experience. Within the second context, I was a lecturer in foundation studio art courses and in the area of curriculum development. The latter involved the responsibility of preparing students to become visual arts teachers at the secondary level. Additionally, I was integrally involved

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<sup>1</sup> Upgraded high schools refer to secondary schools that were formerly disposed toward a pre-vocational orientation, but whose curriculum was later upgraded in the 1990s to reflect the academic orientation of traditional high schools, as part of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Culture’s efforts toward reducing educational stratification.

<sup>2</sup> Lower secondary refers to grades seven to nine of the secondary education system.

<sup>3</sup> The secondary or high school system in Jamaica consists of two cycles. The first cycle commences in Grades 7-9. The second cycle is provided to Grades 10 and 11. At the end of Grade 11 students sit the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) subjects, administered by the Caribbean Examinations Councils (CXC). Some High schools have a continuing education programme and a Sixth Form/Pre-university programme (Grades 12 and 13) where students are prepared for entry to tertiary institutions. Students who are in Sixth Form sit the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency



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with the evaluation of their practicum experiences across a number of diverse secondary schools.

This history is textured with close working relations with visual arts education officers, artists, cultural agents, community leaders, department heads, art educators, parents/guardians and students. Accordingly, it has given me a unique position from which to survey developments in the arts in different sectors and to understand the generative tensions within the field. It also provides administrator, teacher, student and community perspectives on the challenges within the education system and a sense of the measures that are needed to redress the issues that persist.

To complement the latter capacities I pursued a mostly-online Master's degree in arts education through an overseas university since training beyond the undergraduate level in the arts was not available in Jamaica. This experience overlaid new textures onto the old ones and offered a unique vantage point for considering local developments within larger global concerns. It significantly altered my perceptions of how artmaking could be framed as a meaning-making endeavor.

### **The Inquiry**

The aforementioned scenarios formed the backdrop for this research inquiry. They led me to contemplate how artmaking at the lower secondary levels might be expanded from its mostly technical ambitions to participate in contemporary discourses that reflect students' realities. A number of issues grew out of this contemplation. They are framed broadly as:

- 1) What correlation exists between the objectives of the national visual arts curriculum and the cultural realities of lower secondary students in Jamaica?

- 2) What possibilities do the lower secondary visual arts curriculum in Jamaica present for students to explore their personal and cultural selves in relation to contemporary issues?
- 3) How might art teachers build on their current knowledge and come to new understandings of ways to engage with artmaking beyond subject matter?
- 4) What does a critical pedagogy of place look like in visual arts education, and does it provide a platform for students to negotiate their own, personal senses of place?

### **Correlation between the Visual Arts Curriculum and Students' Cultural Realities in Jamaica**

The first issue that centers this research concerns the correlation between the priorities of the national visual arts curriculum in Jamaica and the cultural realities of the students the curriculum serves. The year 1994 marked a significant development in the field of visual arts education in Jamaica. It was the first time that a national curriculum document was prepared to guide the pedagogical undertakings in lower secondary<sup>2</sup> art classrooms across the island. This landmark event represented part of a government initiative to reform secondary education nationwide.

The curriculum followed a scathing review from a UNESCO 1983 report that highlighted the disparities that were evident in the classification of schools within the secondary system. The differences were narrowed to “the high schools and the others” noting their obvious differences in “admission criteria, type of curriculum, enrolment patterns, future promise, social currency and unit expenditure” (Davis, 2004, p. 42). In summary, it highlighted the climate within the traditional high schools that orientated students toward

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<sup>2</sup> Lower secondary refers to grades seven to nine of the secondary education system.

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post-secondary studies whilst the curriculum in the “other” secondary schools prepared students for study in pre-vocational, non-academic subjects.

The UNESCO committee therefore recommended a restructuring and rationalization of secondary education through the provision of a common curriculum to all students in Grades 7-9. The Reform of Secondary Education (R.O.S.E.) programme was the response to this recommendation and served to effect qualitative improvements in the first cycle<sup>3</sup> of secondary education. R.O.S.E. interpreted a common curriculum as:

A plan of learning for all children in terms of content, goals and learning experiences; but it must allow for students of different levels of readiness to learn differently and at different rates. In effect, a common curriculum provides all children with the same basic readiness and ability to proceed at different rates of learning (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1999, p. 3).

This initiative was justified on the grounds of promoting greater equity, quality and productivity in the education system. A series of educational developments followed the institution of R.O.S.E., including the abolition of the different types of Secondary-level schools and the recognition of all ‘secondary’<sup>4</sup> schools as ‘High’ schools that adopted the same curriculum.

Under R.O.S.E., technical and vocational subject areas (Industrial Techniques, Design Arts, Home and Family Management, Business Basics, Agriculture and the Environment) were clustered as a composite subject called Resource and Technology (R &T). The justification was that the areas shared an “application of scientific knowledge of materials (resources) to the solution of practical problems” (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1999, p.

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<sup>3</sup> The secondary or high school system in Jamaica consists of two cycles. The first cycle commences in Grades 7-9. The second cycle is provided to Grades 10 and 11. At the end of Grade 11 students sit the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) subjects, administered by the Caribbean Examinations Councils (CXC). Some High schools have a continuing education programme and a Sixth Form/Pre-university programme (Grades 12 and 13) where students are prepared for entry to tertiary institutions. Students who are in Sixth Form sit the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) at the end of Grades 12 and 13.

<sup>4</sup> Secondary schools prior to this shift included the traditional high schools as well as Junior High, Comprehensive High, Technical High and Independent/Private High schools.

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iv). Along with the reconfiguration of subject areas, the curriculum emphasized a thematic approach, and cooperative learning amongst students. It also required common planning time amongst teachers of the different disciplines to help students realize the interconnectedness between the areas.

The philosophy behind the R & T curriculum centered on its enabling of citizens to participate in the “international economic milieu through interdependence and technological advancements” (Ministry of Education & Culture, 1999, p. 14). Because of the potential offered through R & T for grooming students to be “originators of solutions” and “to utilize [the] resources...at their disposal”, this area was described as an indispensable component of the common curriculum.

Its cooperative focus was also noted as one of its most important features, providing students with the crucial social attributes needed to take their place in society. An associated rationale for this was to address the reality that many students, especially from non-traditional high schools, left school after Grade 9. It was hoped that R & T would equip students with a range of experiences that would prepare them for a vocation or to develop enterprise projects. R & T was also justified on the grounds of providing necessary foundation skills to progress to grades 10-12. Finally, R & T was seen as contributing towards the creation of workers whose goods and services would improve the nation’s self-sufficiency.

The implementation of the curriculum was problematic on a number of levels. Despite the ambitions of equalizing opportunities amongst traditional and non-traditional schools, the curriculum did more to render the hierarchies within the system visible and thus widened the gap further. Whilst in principle it offered reasonable spaces for student innovation and enterprise, the necessary support mechanisms to enable parity were limited. Having worked in both ‘types’ of schools, I acquired first-hand knowledge of these shortfalls and limitations. At the upgraded high schools, many students still grappled with basic literacy and numeracy

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skills. To complicate this issue further, not enough teachers were trained to use the curriculum effectively, which led to their drawing either upon intuitive pedagogical approaches, or abandoning the curriculum altogether.

Further, the common planning time that was the supposed basis for strengthening the interdisciplinary nature of the subject was hardly effected, contributing to frustration on a number of fronts. Added to these challenges was the shortened contact time with students in order to facilitate their rotation through the varied disciplines, and the largely text-based national examination that assessed their knowledge of the content areas.

Though many of these issues with R & T were absent in the traditional high school context, other issues manifested reflecting the teachers' disposition toward the subject as lacking sufficient academic depth and artistic rigour. As a result, many teachers returned to traditional ways of teaching art that placed emphasis on the formal aspects of artmaking. They nonetheless allowed the students to sit the examination. And, since one of the stated goals of the examination was to provide certification for those who dropped out of high school at grade nine, this further relegated the curriculum as belonging to those that were 'other'.

This assessment is consistent with a 2004 evaluation undertaken by the Task Force on Educational Reform, a body created to oversee the transformation of the education system. According to Davis (2004), the chairman of the Task Force, some teachers and administrators resisted the curriculum contributing to "a significant sector of the secondary system...not participat[ing] in the programme" (p. 102). On the other end of the spectrum he highlighted the need for "a greater degree of coherence between the common curriculum and the Grade 10 and 11 programme, which terminates in the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC)" (p. 102).

The report also identified lack of training and equity in the distribution of resources as factors that affected the sustainability of the programme. Amongst his recommendations, Davis (2004) noted, “A new thrust to inculcate positive attitudes and values in the pursuit of a disciplined, culturally aware and ethical Jamaican citizen is also critical” (p. 168). The application of a common curriculum to boost the performance of underperforming schools reveals the government’s underestimation of the ways that culture works within a milieu of socio-economic and political designations. Davis’ (2004) focus on inculcating cultural awareness in learners is therefore an important step in addressing the issues that affect visual arts curriculum development in Jamaica.

### **Possibilities to Explore Personal and Cultural Self in Relation to the Contemporary**

The rapid technological shifts, increased migration and market driven emphases of globalization have provided strong premises for re-evaluating the role schools play in preparing students to participate successfully in contemporary society. These contexts have also prompted numerous critiques of both the substance of education and the policies that support educational practices worldwide (2004). More specifically, it has provided the backdrop for examining the role of neoliberalism as a central ideology underpinning educational policy and practice.

Historically, education has long been seen as the “great equalizer” of the disparities by which societies are beset, and to enhance a country’s competitiveness in world markets (Bracey, 2003; Grierson, 2003; Hill, 2006; Manning, 2008). One widely known example of efforts to serve these market goals is the “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) Act in the United States, known for its standards, testing and accountability requirements. It is frequently featured in debates about such educational priorities and policies (Brissett, 2011; Lindsay, 2013; Peters & Marshall, 2004), and criticized for its production of “skilled, yet fragmented, human beings” (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008, p. 168).

The aforementioned challenges reflect the realities in Jamaica and elsewhere. Unsurprisingly, they are also situated in growing concerns over the dissonance between classroom arts practice and the events that characterize contemporary society (Freedman, 2003; Gude, 2007; Inwood, 2010; Smith, 2007; Tavin, 2005; Walker, 2009). The subject of relevance in visual arts education is not new. Davis (2005) describes the role of the arts in education as having a history of “reactive malleability” where the subject’s viability has always been dependent on the changing priorities and reform interests of general education” (p. 85). However, the proliferation of new technologies, mass media, globalization and critiques of social norms have given the relevance debate unprecedented import today (Freedman, 2003; Smith, 2007; Tavin, 2003).

Hill (2006) examined the cultural and identity ramifications for Jamaica’s participation in tertiary education markets opened up through globalization. Amongst a range of significances articulated, she stated, “One remnant of Jamaica’s colonial past is the vulnerability of its education system to global influences” (p. 3). To confront these vulnerabilities she proposed the development of a culturally relevant program of professional development for practicing art teachers in Jamaica. Cultural relevance in this instance is articulated as exploring, interpreting and preserving Jamaica’s cultural legacies in addition to “provid[ing] a fertile site of resistance against economic and mental colonialism” (p. 6).

Hill’s (2006) work carries import for critiquing the revised R.O.S.E. II Visual Arts curriculum that was modified as per Davis’ (2004) assessment that the aesthetics needed to be recognized as subjects in their own right. The philosophy underpinning this curriculum acknowledges the universality of art and its potency in “promot[ing] historical and cultural awareness, encourag[ing] social interaction, and enhanc[ing] aesthetic and spiritual development” (Ministry of Education & Culture, 2000, p. 2).

### **Lessons Available to Teachers through the Presumed Aspects of Artmaking**

This renewed import resonates with Gude's (2000) findings that revealed that prospective art teachers' capacities for innovation were overshadowed by what she referred to as the "culture" of the curriculum. She identified this "culture" as a crutch for the emerging teachers who had difficulty imagining their curriculum outside of "the style, content, and methods of their earlier education" (p. 1). This informed her critique of what is deemed "foundational" in the field. Gude's critique was centered on the ways that the modernist Bauhaus artmaking models are conceived of as the core of what students 'ought to know' by teachers in many of today's secondary art classrooms. This stance provoked recommendations by her to contextualize curriculum within the complex debates of contemporary society, and in relation to students' lives.

In New Zealand, Smith's (2007) findings add relevance to this emphasis on contextualizing decontextualized curricula. Her work centered on an examination of how teachers' pedagogical practices reflected the changing demographic of the school population. Smith found that the teachers' practices interpreted diversity as ethnicity, as was consistent with the interpretations set out in the standards of the national document. Even within this narrow definition, attention was primarily directed toward the bicultural orientation that is New Zealand's political position, rather than being inclusive of ethnic diversity more broadly.

And, in the cases where 'other' cultures were included, the focus, in instances, tended toward essentialized representations of the cultures, but nonetheless provided outlets for students to find their own cultural terms to shape their artworks. Teacher practice also reflected the teachers' personal and intuitive ideas about what was important to teach in art. Smith (2007) recommends a shift in art education from an "evolutionary position... to the adoption of a more revolutionary stance" that allows students to participate in the decoding of contemporary culture (p. 263). She suggests that an emphasis on the theoretical



underpinnings of art education both at the pre-service and continuing education levels for art teachers could strengthen teacher capacity in this respect.

Smith's (2007) findings align with Walker's (2004b) arguments that "art educators and art teachers frequently lack sufficient and tangible understandings of the processes that distinguish artmaking activity" (p. 6). She suggests, "substantive knowledge of this process is needed to guide effective planning for artmaking instruction" (p. 6). Walker's (2001) artmaking model was developed to shape this vision of artmaking as a meaningful engagement with ideas.

The model is based on the practice of contemporary artists and utilizes big ideas<sup>5</sup> as the conceptual center of the artmaking endeavor supported by elements such as personal connections, knowledge, artmaking problems and boundaries<sup>6</sup>. This process is relevant to the ambitions of this study; indeed this study grew out of the transformation of my own conceptions of visual arts pedagogy as informed by Walker's model, bringing purposeful structure to my lessons. This helped my students to situate their personal and cultural concerns within wider socio-political interests to make sense of the interrelationships that the process yielded.

Still yet, *The Reenchantment of Art* by Suzi Gablik adds another dimension to efforts at re-defining the purpose of art that is also useful for art education. Like the positions reflected above, she posits that today's art needs to raise new questions that supersede style and content but she places emphasis on critiquing social and environmental responsibility. She labels the psychic and social structures in which we live as "profoundly antiecological, unhealthy and destructive," and advocates forms that acknowledge our "interconnectedness rather than separateness" (Gablik, 1991, p. 6). Place is at the center of this critique.

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<sup>5</sup> Big ideas are broad important human issues...characterized by complexity, ambiguity, contradiction and multiplicity" (Walker, 2001, p. 1).

<sup>6</sup> Boundaries set necessary limits that enable artists to work productively" (Walker, 2001, p. 73).

### **A Critical Visual Arts Pedagogy of Place?**

Discourses on place in education decry the emphasis that contemporary education places on those aspects of achievement that are quantifiable, statistically comparable, and leave the broader contexts of life unexamined (Gruenewald, 2003b). Paradoxical or not, these complexities wrought by globalization have ascribed greater significance to place studies (Gruenewald & Smith, 2008; Hutchison, 2004; Saracino, 2010; Smith & Sobel, 2010; Stevenson, 2008). As the world collapses into a ‘smaller’ and seemingly generic space through increased mobility and rapid technologies, increased attention has been given to the pedagogical possibilities inherent in place-conscious education.

Aimed at sharing in the recovery of locally defined identities and sustainable practices, place-conscious educational opportunities in formal schooling manifest as experiential learning, context-based learning, problem-based learning, outdoor education, and environmental/ecological education. Other domains that may incorporate place-based orientations include bioregional education, natural history, critical pedagogy, service learning, community-based education and Native American education (Gruenewald, 2003b). Their defining characteristic is their engagement with local settings.

Those working in the field of visual arts education have begun to participate in this agenda, particularly through advancing bioregional perspectives (Blandy & Hoffman, 1993; Graham, 2007; Inwood, 2008; Somerville, et al., 2011). These proponents ask us to consider:

- “art’s sustainable functionality in education” (Gradle, 2007, p. 407)
- “...the art of particular places...to motivate students to engage in or investigate critically artistic practices from the perspective of place” (Lai & Ball, 2002, p. 65)

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- “a methodology for a place pedagogy” that “encompass[es] the multiple forms in which alternative representations of place are expressed” (Somerville, 2010, p. 340)
- “mov[ing] from the important but limited notion of art being solely about personal expression toward a vision of teaching that could engage students in a reflective and social process with the larger community” (Graham, 2007, p. 13)
- “creat[ing] learning environments that are sensitive to practices that promote the sustainability of the environment and attend to the concept of community as place” (Blandy & Hoffman, 1993, p. 31)
- “pay[ing] close attention to local students’ interests and...examining texts, artifacts, and performances of local cultural production [as] it empowers the local by legitimating local cultural production as literature and art” (Inwood, 2008, p. 262)
- “[that] senses of place and a serial sensitivity to place, are invaluable social and cultural tools, providing much-needed connections to what we call ‘nature’ and sometimes, to cultures not our own” (Lippard, 1997, p. 33)
- “a place-based, visual ethnographic approach to art [that] encourages students to learn about the social and cultural dimensions of art and its connections to self, community, and the environment.” (Powell, 2010, p. 52).

This thesis represents my own attempt to investigate the share that the art classroom as a formative place has in supporting the positive identities of students. Consequently, whilst this study draws upon prevailing educational discourses on place to inform the ways that classrooms are socially constructed sites, my intention is to examine the complementarity between art classrooms and the ways students ‘*place*’ themselves in the world. I offer

strategies that may be used to help students make sense of the ways in which the art classroom legitimizes their affective lives and serves as a bridge to access and connect their various life worlds will be the focus of this study.

The study specifically explores how the practice of place-based education in the visual arts classroom translates to the lower secondary school context, since much of the relevant literature on *sense of place* and place-making in education centers on small children (Sobel, 1998; Sorin & Brooks, 2013; Wilson, 1997). The context of the visual arts classroom was considered key to this inquiry for its nature as a “complex text” of visual, verbal, aural and experiential characters (Carpenter, 2003). And, embedded in this multimodal space, lies the potential for students to access, explore, connect, and contest assumptions within places that challenge their conception of self, their communities and their futures.

### **The Importance and Professional Significance of the Research**

This research represents one effort toward remediation of the paucity of empirical research into the strategies that are available to visual arts teachers to consider artmaking as place-making, and the art classroom as a place that enables or constrains students’ senses of self, place and community. Such a focus necessarily jigsaws grand narratives of place with embodied understandings of place, and therefore challenges the role of visual arts education in preparing students to ‘place’ themselves in the world.

The research considers the interrelationships between the everyday events of the art classroom, the formal curriculum, and the broader contexts of students’ lives. In accordance, it gives preeminence to the undervalued contexts of students’ lifeworlds to re-mark the way that they are represented in the curriculum. The re-marks seek to inscribe new marks onto the past ones that have shaped conceptions of the role of visual arts education in the recovery of locally defined identities and in the ways the field participates in global discourses.

This research has the potential to inform current thinking about cultural sustainability and the professional practice of practitioners, teacher educators, policy developers and curriculum facilitators. It might also contribute to critical conversations in the field, providing an important reference point for the development of art pedagogy that explores the personal and the cultural self in relation to global processes.

Despite its locatedness in Christchurch, New Zealand and Kingston, Jamaica, it is envisaged that this research will be professionally significant for art educators beyond the aforementioned contexts. It is also hoped that the research will assist in bridging the gap between theory and practice in visual arts education scholarship with a place-making inclination.

### **Research Design**

This study was designed to examine the ways that artmaking may promote and render visibility to students' senses of self, place, and community. In concert with this ideal, I examined participants' perceptions of self, their interests, their ideologies and their communities, using the visual arts as my primary lens of inquiry. By implementing a 'place-making' art curriculum in the secondary and tertiary settings chosen, I attempted to answer the guiding research question: How can visual arts teachers use artmaking to help adolescent students to recognize, critically analyze and interpret their senses of self, place, and community?

Both the teacher and the student are key figures in this inquiry, and as such, the study involves related case studies of the two groups. As the demographics of the participants were different the study does not aspire to offer a comparison, but rather to develop a multifaceted view of the question. In the first case, strategies were trialed with secondary art students in Christchurch, New Zealand. Similar strategies were trialed with teacher-trainees in Jamaica

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to gauge their responsiveness to the offerings of this alternative curriculum and to determine its relevance for the Jamaican secondary education context.

With social constructivism as its theoretical center, the study pays attention to knowledge: the ways it is co-constructed and how the structures of art classrooms serve to mediate students' senses of self, place and community. A case study design provides the necessary support for the in-depth focus required at the sites, as well as the necessary congruence with the arts-based methodology of a/r/tography, affording needed opportunities to extrapolate the nuances in the meanings that were available through the art projects explored.

Consistent also with the qualitative nature of the study, and with the tenets of a/r/tography, I sometimes place myself at its center to examine the discursive spaces between my diverse roles as researcher, artist and teacher. I am interested in how these roles variously and collectively constitute the way I perceive and interpret the participants' senses of self, place and community. My positionality therefore figures in the analysis of the data gleaned. A variety of methods were utilized to uncover the participants' perceptions of self, place and community including artworks, observations, journals, informal interviews, field notes and documentation in the form of photographs and videos. The analysis served to inform an alternative approach that visual arts teachers may bring to the artmaking process to imbue it with more meaning.

### **Organization of the Thesis**

The thesis is comprised of three sections and is divided into six chapters; each chapter is framed within a particular context. Part One contextualizes the research problem. It consists of Chapters One and Two and presents an overview of the study, a rationale for its significance, and outlines the methodological framework inclusive of the design of the study and its limitations. Part Two, consisting of Chapter Three, discusses the theoretical

frameworks and literature that informs the study. It situates the research problem within theories of place, identity and visualization and contextualizes visual arts education within the historical and cultural locations of New Zealand and Jamaica.

Part Three contextualizes the realities of the multiple case studies within Chapters Four and Five. Chapter Four outlines the Christchurch, New Zealand case study and presents an analysis of it. Similarly, Chapter Five provides an overview of the Kingston, Jamaica case study and offers a corresponding analysis of it. Chapter Six is a summary of the study: it provides implications for policy and art education, offers some conclusions to the study, and provides recommendations for future research.

### **Boundaries of the Study**

This study qualitatively examines the perceptions of two particular groups of individuals (students and teacher-trainees) pertaining to the ways they recognise, analyse, and interpret their senses of self, place and community. Their experiences are located in two distinct geographical locations, and these contexts helped to determine the type of artworks that were produced and the feedback received. The findings could, therefore, be different had the case been in different locations. As such, the study is interested in the particularities of these cases and not in furnishing generalizable results, though aspects of the curriculum developed could be replicated in other secondary education contexts.

The outsider position I hold as a non-native New Zealand researcher shapes my understanding and translation of the histories, policies and issues of art education in this country. Accordingly, I have supplemented my understandings with policy documents, curriculum documents, and other research work, and through working closely with my supervisors and the heads of departments who are knowledgeable about this terrain.

My position of being resident in New Zealand for the duration of the study posed some geographical constraints as it relates to the physical interaction that I had with my

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sources in Jamaica. The time frame that was assigned to the Kingston case was therefore limited and determined the quantity of work that could be carried out there. A longer or shorter time frame might have generated different results.

However, working within a structure with which I was familiar facilitated these navigations. And whilst I could be viewed as potentially biased toward this context due to my familiarity with it, I have tried to allay this by making my positionality clear and by using multiple sources to triangulate my claims. Nonetheless, I acknowledge that my perspective is coloured by my insider status despite my best efforts to mediate this through the methods previously described.

Finally, the limited documentation and research on secondary art education in Jamaica has impact on the quality of the contextual portrait that I present. To compensate for this, I have drawn upon the knowledge and expertise of those who have worked within the field over a significant period, as well as my previous experiences as a teacher and lecturer in the field. I have also looked at developments within art education globally that informed the structure of the Jamaican visual arts curriculum, to provide a comprehensive view of the art education scene. The positive aspect of this limitation is that this study will help to fill the gap on research in the area of secondary education.

### **Definition of Terms**

Understanding the scope of this study is hinged on familiarity with some key terms. They are defined as follows:

**Artmaking-** generally refers to the various components involved in the production of art. It is a composite of elements such as structure, intention, design, improvisation and modification. More specifically, it weaves together ideas and concepts, artist models, materials, media and technologies, thoughts, feelings and experiences, personal connections,



the artist's inspiration, philosophy, intention and stylistic innovations into a whole that we call art.

**A/r/tography-** a form of arts-based methodology where the researcher's artist-and teacher-and-researcher roles are relational and educational phenomena is examined through an artistic understanding and inquiry process.

**Visual culture-** "all that is humanly formed and sensed through vision or visualization and shapes the way we live our lives" (Freedman, 2003)

**Place-based education-** learning that is rooted in what is local—the unique history, environment, culture, economy, literature and art of a particular place. (Smith & Sobel, 2010)

**Place-conscious education-** "aims to reframe the discourse of democracy and accountability so that the character and quality of places, and our relationship to them, figure significantly in the purpose, process, and assessment of education" (Gruenewald, 2003b)

**Critical pedagogy-** "[serves] to examine schools in their historical context and as part of the existing social and political fabric that characterizes the dominant society. [It] challenge[s] the assumption that schools function as major sites of social and economic mobility. Instead, [it] suggest[s] that schooling must be analysed as a cultural and historical process in which students are positioned within assymetrical relations of power on the basis of specific race, class, and gender groupings" (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008).

**Critical pedagogy of place-** "the emergent discourse developed from an intersection of scholarships in critical pedagogy and place-based education" (Gruenewald, 2003a)

**Decolonization-** "learning to recognise disruption and injury and to address their causes" (Gruenewald, 2003a)

**Reinhabitation-** "learning to live-in-place in an area that has been disrupted and injured through past exploitation" (Gruenewald 2003a)

**Sense of place-** refers to “the general ways in which people feel about places, sense it, and assign concepts to it” (Najafi & Shariff, 2011)

**Placemaking-** the ways in which people occupy a place to develop its capacity to sustain the positive identities of its inhabitants.

**Space-** “tends to reflect an innate human sense of freedom” (Tuan, 1977)

**Place-** “synonymous with an innate sense of ‘security;’ “What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value” (Tuan, 1977).

**Third space-** “the process of cultural hybridity [that] gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation” (Bhabha, 1990)

**Culturally Responsive Teaching-** “is informed by and responsive to students’ cultural experiences. These experiences are viewed as assets that give guidance to the creation of transformative curriculum design” (Ballengee Morris, Ambush, & Daniel, 2012)

## Chapter Two

### Methodology

*The particular is always more than a match for the universal;  
the universal always has to accommodate itself to the particular (Goethe).*

#### Introduction

This chapter introduces the particularities that define the research inquiry: How can visual arts teachers use artmaking to help adolescent students to recognize, critically analyze, and interpret their senses of self, place, and community? The empirical focus of the research suited a methodology, mapped broadly onto the terrain of qualitative research, but that more specifically aligned with artistic practices and processes, to both explore the potential of the inquiry, and to communicate the outcomes. Multiple-case studies and a/r/tography were employed to fulfill these purposes. Taking an a/r/tographer's stance, I also engaged in reflection and reflexivity regarding my own teaching practice, and the ways it strengthened or limited the research experiences.

The chapter is divided into two parts. Part One describes the research paradigms, research sites, research participants, and the data collection and analysis methods that serve to illuminate its aesthetic features. It also delineates the ways in which the research objectives were both negotiated and addressed. Part Two focuses on the ethical considerations of the study and features the profiles of the participating institutions and participants. It also outlines the boundaries that framed the study.

Part One: Research Paradigms, Data Collection and Analysis Methods

**Research Paradigms**

The decision to locate the study within the qualitative paradigm was founded on several factors, chief of which was a “search for qualities—the characteristics of [the artmaking] experience,” that hold and render visible one’s senses of self, place and community (Eisner, 1991, in Stokrocki, 1997, p. 34). Of complementary value was the need for contextual understandings of those renderings, within the natural settings of the participants and from their own frames of reference. With its multimethod focus (Norman K. Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Flick, 2008) and its openness to alternative and multiple ways of knowing, the qualitative paradigm provides an appropriate platform for investigating the ways that the arts participate in the enterprise of making sense of the human condition and the surrounding world (Knowles & Cole, 2008).

Framed more specifically, the complex (explicit/implicit) features of the research problem, such as the varied ages, designations and locale of the participants, warranted the use of a research methodology that is underpinned by a constructivist interpretive paradigm. This paradigm assumes that knowledge is not discovered but rather socially constructed and that reality is always mediated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Accordingly, the framework presumes a relativist ontology that acknowledged the multiple realities that shape the research, and a subjectivist epistemology that privileged the relationship between myself, and the participants in the co-creation of understandings. A naturalistic set of methodological procedures was employed to verify the understandings that emerged from these interactions, and to reveal the value-laden nature of the inquiry. It illuminated the ways that social reality depends on a constant process of interpretation and reinterpretation and is therefore subject to continuous construction and deconstruction (Smith, 2007).

This socially constructed premise on which emergent meanings are found presents ethical implications and bears congruence with Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis' (1997) belief that "the researcher does not come as an empty slate to the job of interpreting the subject..." (p. 66). Rather, this authorial role, translated as, "the way we in which we see and respond to a situation, and how we interpret what we see, will bear our own signature" (Eisner, 1998, p. 34).

In accordance, a range of interpretive interconnected practices were employed to capture the ways that both the arts and place implicate and are implicated in the ways that the participants negotiated their senses of self, place and community. Additionally, the practices served to support an in-depth understanding of the phenomena, examined on the participants' own terms and in their own voices.

The interdisciplinary (arts and place) and transnational (Christchurch and Kingston) understandings as well as the different target groups (students and teacher-trainees) that this research addresses, exists within a web of social, cultural, historical and political relations. Within this setting, I essentially functioned as a bricoleur: a "Jack of all trades" (Levi-Strauss, 1996 in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 17). As bricoleur, I "produce a bricolage—that is, a pieced together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 7).

These representations justify the use of multiple case studies and arts-based methodological practices to address the complexities of the dual ontology that formed the basis of the research inquiry. The first concerned the complexity of participants' being-in-the-world whilst the second involved the nature of the social construction of senses of self, place and community through art. Both methodologies enabled nuanced meanings across the research sites and served to add depth and rigour to the research.

### Multiple Case Studies

Held within the main research question is the assumption that both student and teacher-trainee responses to sensing self, place and community were critical to the research encounter. Negotiating these responses necessarily implicates “bounded”<sup>7</sup> systems, thus implicating a case study design for the study (Merriam, 1998). Multiple case studies provide an opportunity to tease out the “compelling uniqueness” that each group brought to the phenomena and further, to test the value of such a focus within the sphere of art education (Stake, 2000, p. 440). They also capture complexity by enabling insights from data analysis within each case and across cases (Merriam, 1988). They may either replicate situations across cases or represent contrasting situations (Yin, 2003). This research represents the latter application.

The contrasting cases, student and teacher, while limiting some aspects of the study, also allowed for the examination of a complementary facet of the main research question (Stake, 1995). These facets are inextricably linked to the places that inform them and as such the inquiry privileged the real-world contexts where the investigation took place. The study is located in a secondary school in Christchurch, New Zealand and a tertiary teacher-training institution in Kingston, Jamaica.

The sites were purposively chosen on the basis of the strengths of their visual arts programs. The charter for the Christchurch school clearly outlines artistic and cultural interests as key to students’ preparation for life beyond school. The Kingston site is considered a key player in art curriculum development in Jamaica, and its art department articulates a vision of producing culturally responsive educators that will use the arts as a catalyst for change.

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<sup>7</sup> “‘Bounded’ means that the case is separated out for research in terms of time, place, or some physical boundaries” (Creswell, 2002, p. 485).

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The choice of sites relied on accessibility as much as capacity to support the research quest. The study was conducted following the tragic earthquake of February 22, 2011 in Christchurch, one of New Zealand's most disastrous natural events to date. Negotiating subsequent entry into the schools there in order to conduct the student-based portion of the research proved difficult. Further information about these challenges is provided later in the chapter. The school that ultimately became the student-based research site was particularly receptive to the focus of my research project, however, and well-located geographically in terms of my own location. Again, owing to the earthquake, data collection commenced later than anticipated and, as such, limited the time remaining within which data collection in Jamaica might occur. This influenced my decision to pursue data collection at an institution where I had worked formerly.

The choice of geographic locations also reflects my interests in both places for their histories of re-storying their tumultuous and eventful histories through the arts and culture. These opportunities existed discretely as well as across the two cultural sites. One example of this cross-cultural potential was the influence of Bob Marley and reggae music on Māori, which has inspired forms of resistance against colonial domination (Poupeye, 2011). This particular cultural combination also reflects my location in Christchurch for the period of the research and my own cultural roots in Kingston and Jamaica.

The particularities afforded through the separate case studies were chosen to elucidate their intrinsic focus (Creswell, 2007). On the other hand, their generalities sought to illuminate the complexities at their intersection and thus to maximize what could be learned (Stake, 1995). Though the sites were broadly unparallel in nature, Yin (2012) advises, "the ensuing data can provide greater confidence in [the] findings," thus making the study more robust and compelling (p. 7).

### **Arts-based Methodology**

Since the visual data was primary in the study, I was interested in a methodology that privileged the arts as the principal means of uncovering more nuanced understandings of the ways that the participants experience their life worlds (Eisner, 2008; McNiff, 2008). Arts-based methodologies are distinguished from other forms of qualitative research through the centrality the arts have as a means for understanding and examining experience. Accordingly, the arts serve as both the products of inquiry and the communication of research findings. In concert, this research promotes the capacity held within the arts to contribute particular personal, social, and cultural insights about educational experience that may be less accessible through more linguistic-based research methods (Eisner, 2006; O'Donoghue, 2009). Given the epistemological background of arts-based research, this methodology was seen as a necessary complement to the case study methodology.

### ***A/R/Tography***

A/R/Tography is one form of arts-based methodology, but is distinctive in the relational perspective it brings to inquiry and interpretation. This perspective inherits from “feminist, post-structuralist, hermeneutic and other postmodern theories that understand the production of knowledge as difference thereby producing different ways of living in the world” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. 107). Such a focus highlights the interrelationships and intersubjectivities of arts education practices (Beare, 2011), blurring the distinction of the researcher and those researched. Springgay, Irwin, and Kind (2008) state, “a/r/tographers don’t simply research phenomena in the arts using qualitative means; they are artists-and teachers-and-researchers who examine educational phenomena through an artistic understanding and inquiry process” (p. 87). A/r/tographical knowledge then, is constituted in a form of relational aesthetics that necessarily sees meaning and the circumstances that produce it as being co-dependent.



The rigour of a/r/tography therefore lies in its “continuous reflective and reflexive stance to engagement, analysis and learning” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. 117). Given that I am all of these—artist, researcher and teacher— and that my identities, perspectives, beliefs and values help to shape the research process, this methodology fits the exploration of the patterns of meaning at their intersection. In like manner, in this study, it also illuminates the dynamics and complexities of classroom life. This potential is explored throughout Chapters Four and Five of the thesis.

A/r/tographers make sense of the world through renderings or conceptual organisers based on notions of relationality: contiguity, living inquiry, metaphor/metonymy, openings, reverberations and excess. As reasoned by Irwin and Springgay (2008), the triumph of renderings over methods allows for flexibility and intersubjective locations that enable active participation in meaning making. This flexibility makes a/r/tography open to re-interpretation and, as such, the list of renderings above are not taken to be exhaustive, exclusive or conclusive (Beare, 2011). Accordingly, this study offers an additional rendering: palimpsests.

Palimpsests refer to the tradition of recycling parchment by erasing existing text for newer texts. The erasure practice involved a chemical process that caused the original text to take on a ghostly appearance (Powell, 2008). I first came across the concept through Tavin’s (2005) examination of objects of visual culture as “remarkable texts” and was fascinated by the way palimpsests both “erase and retain” the past (McDonagh, 1987 in Tavin, 2005, p. 214). This liminality locates it in a space akin to Bhabha’s (1994) conception of a hybrid “third space” that offers a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation” (p. 211). Palimpsestic renderings offer possibilities for negotiating senses of self, place and community by juxtaposing or layering spatial, temporal and embodied place experiences (Springgay et al., 2008, p. 86). Such renderings of the data allowed for intertextual readings of self, place and community, the foci of the research.

## **Data Collection**

Multiple methods of data collection were used to capture rich perspectives and ensure in-depth understandings of the participants across the two cases (Creswell, 2002; Merriam, 1988; Patton, 1990). The methods chosen were those that most suited the nature of the research question. Further, their various forms served to yield diverse perspectives on the fundamental issues that frame the research. Five primary methods were used to collect data across the cases, including artworks, documents, participant observations, reflections, and interviews. In concert with the tenets of a/r/tography, I also created artworks as both reflective engagement and reflexive analysis of the event of the research experience (Irwin & Springgay, 2008). These are presented as personalized visual notes throughout Chapters Four and Five, and consist of imagery extracted from my visual journal, which I have created or adapted.

The specific application methodology and site for each of the data collection techniques is represented in Table 2 below:

Table 2 Data Collection Methods

<b>Data</b>	<b>Case Study 1 - Christchurch</b>	<b>Case Study 2 - Kingston</b>
<b>Artworks</b>	Student art (results of individual and group effort)	Teacher-trainee art (results of individual and group effort)
	Video recordings of performance based activities	Video recordings of performance based activities.
<b>Documents</b>	ERO Report on school performance	Online documents with information on the site and existing theses
	Online documents and existing theses	
	Census data	
	School Charter, Department Aims & Philosophy	Statement of Department Vision, Aims & Philosophy
	Curriculum related documents	Curriculum related documents
	Assessment instruments	Assessment instruments
	Email communications	Email communications
<b>Participant Observations</b>	Photo and video recorded observations	Photo and video recorded observations
	Field notes	Field notes
<b>Reflections</b>	Reflective sheets based on art projects	Reflective sheets based on art projects
	Reflections on field notes	Reflections on field notes
	Project evaluation by the HOD	Project evaluation by the HOD
<b>Interviews</b>	Informal discussions with students	Informal discussions with teacher-trainees
	Informal discussions with HOD	Informal discussions with HOD
	Informal discussions with students	Formal interview with Education Officer

## Presentation of the data

### *Artworks*

Artworks serve as the primary source of data across the cases, following a long-standing tradition of investigating how images carry and convey meaning (Barthes, 1981; Bourdieu, 1990; Langer, 1957; Prosser, 1998a). The import they bring to this study resides in their capacity to provide concrete representation of the ways in which participants visually negotiated their senses of self, place, and community. This import also aligns with the five realms that Green (2000) nominates to support the use of imagery as ethical inquiry:

distillation, impact, endurance, conviction, and concretization (p. 19). Similarly, it finds congruence with Weber's (2008) posture that it is their "ability...to convey multiple messages, to pose questions, and to point to both abstract and concrete thoughts in so economical a fashion that makes image-based media highly appropriate" (p. 43).

The participants engaged in the production of artistic images, which became a source of data to address the research questions. They were asked to create a variety of artworks that explored their perceptions of self, place and community. These provided the basis for further discussion and elaboration on meanings, surfacing through reflection sheets, forums such as critiques or informal discussions, and occasionally, performance art forms.

The art exercises explored were, however, considered secondary to how the participants explored, since the arts, in this instance, served a larger goal than passive reproduction tasks. Instead, they contributed an evolving awareness of who the participants were as people, and furthered art dialogues about self, place and community.

These experiences enabled diverse and shared understandings, and served as concrete examples that informed analysis. Given that one of my research goals was to also implicate my various roles within this project, I engaged in the development of artworks as a form of reflexive practice. In so doing, I reflect upon and interrogate not only the meanings embedded in the works, but also the extent to which my facilitation supported or inhibited student processes, and to communicate the insights gained. The graphic below (Fig. 1) represents these interrelationships:

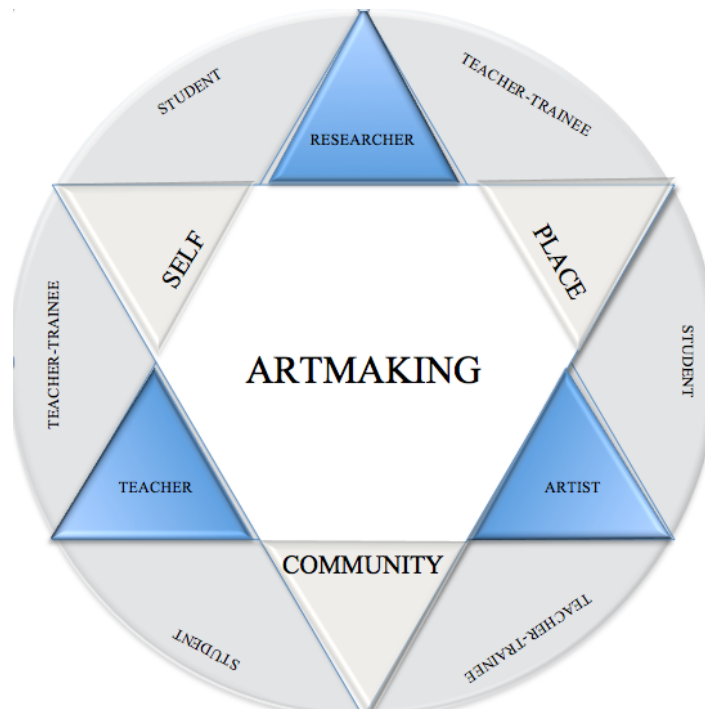


Figure 1 Artmaking Interrelationships

### ***Documents***

Holsti (1969) in Merriam (1988) defines documents “in the broad sense of any communication” (pp. 104-105). Documents utilized in this study provided a pre-existing data source for provide contextual information and insights about the sites under study. Caution must be in relation to their neutrality in the reflection and construction of social reality (Smith, 2007), as well as in their authenticity and accuracy (Merriam, 1998).

The analysis of publicly accessible documents such as census data and ERO reports, as well as other online documents such as institution websites provide a partial picture of the contexts under study. They provide demographic data, histories and information regarding cultural diversity. Institution documents such as school charter, vision/philosophy statements and curriculum related documentation provided insight into policy, culture, the values upheld by the sites and the ‘place’ of visual arts education within the broader structure of their

operations. The email communications largely served to establish relationships with the participating institutions and work out the logistics of the study.

### ***Participant Observation***

Merriam (1988) describes several stances that the researcher can assume as an observer, ranging from being a full participant to being a spectator; each with their particular advantages and limitations. My stance most closely aligned with what Merriam terms a researcher-participant, a role delegated to one “who participates in a social situation but is personally only partially involved, so that he can function as a researcher” (p. 93). My participation as an a/r/tographer, however, complicates this definition since I functioned as artist-and-researcher-and-teacher, involving myself wholly in the study.

Though challenging, this stance offered the advantage of observing the dynamics of and in-between the various teacher-student, peer and curriculum relationships through different lenses. It allowed multiple insights into the ways students perceive self, place and community, as well as the ways my own perceptions evolved in response to theirs. Field notes were used to partially record and maintain details of what was seen and experienced in order to strengthen or inform subsequent aspects/phases of the project. Photo and video documentation helped to supplement the field notes. Weber (2008) notes that the strength of this particular method lies not only in, “provid[ing] a visual running record” but also through furnishing “another eye on the process as well as valuable feedback, helping researchers assess, adjust, and fine-tune” (p. 48).

### ***Reflections***

Reflection in this study took two forms: internally (from the vantage point of participants and I), and externally (from the perspective of the HOD or the Community Member). In the first appearance, participants were encouraged to pursue reflective tasks that

helped them critically engage with the process of artmaking and make sense of the artworks that they produced.

The internal reflective process included descriptions of the artwork, possible connections to contemporary culture, and the motivations/intended functions that lay behind the created works. Additionally, they served as a starting point for subsequent informal interviews or discussions of the emerging themes. They also provided some ‘measure’ of their feelings about the project and generally helped to clarify their intended meanings, providing specificity to interpretations of data.

Since I solely undertook the facilitation of the major components of the study, including the interpretation of the results, the external project evaluations from the HODs of the departments under study were also included, as well as the evaluation of a community member who participated in the Kingston case. These were aimed at “triangulating” the accounts provided, and yielding additional insights into the events that comprised the project and might prove useful for future recommendations concerning projects of this nature. The evaluations were prepared independently by the individuals involved and were presented to me at the end of the projects.

### *Interviews*

Merriam (1998) defines an interview as “a conversation with purpose” (p. 71). Broadly explained, Patton (1980) suggests that this purpose encompasses the things we are not able to observe directly and that “allow us to enter the other person’s perspective” (p. 196). Interviews were instrumental in informal and formal ways throughout this study to facilitate ongoing dialogue and reflection throughout the course of study, with the aim of accessing perspectives that helped to maximize data obtained.

Informal types of interviews took the form of discussions weekly, mostly in group settings to create a non-threatening platform for the participants to “bounce ideas off each

other” and to learn from each others’ perspectives and insights. These interviews followed activities at various stages of the project in order to capture the participants’ perceptions of the project in general as well as to facilitate focus on the research questions. These were recorded and transcribed.

I also collected formal interview data in Case 2 with an education officer in the Kingston setting, supplementing the limited information that is publicly available on visual arts curriculum development as well as to gauge the relevance of the project to the vision and the mission of the Jamaican Ministry of Education. A semi-structured interview format was utilized here for the purpose of responding to the “emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic” being discussed (Merriam, 1988, p. 74). It was guided by a list of questions and issues as a starting point, but was open enough to accommodate shifts in the conversation to gain additional insights. Given the professional history I shared with the interviewee, the interview reflected an honest and open relationship.

A pseudonym was used to protect the anonymity of the respondent. The interview was recorded to preserve the integrity and accuracy of the arguments for analysis and later transcribed verbatim. Post interview notes were used to identify the salient points that especially addressed the research inquiry.

### **Data Analysis and Verification**

Throughout the data collection process the various forms of data were catalogued independently and chronologically. Since I had accumulated large volumes of data, this was one way of managing them to ensure that they could be easily located thereafter. Cataloguing also allowed for the identification of common elements within the data that may have had “issue-relevant meaning” (Creswell, 1998, p. 154). Specifically, at the end of each week, the data that were gathered from the project underwent review and visual memos were created to process and reveal noticeable patterns.



Toward the end of the data collection phase, these patterns from the individual activities were revisited to identify their relationship to the whole—to the recurrent issues, ideas, patterns and themes that emerged from the data generally. Audio-visual materials related to discussions, class critiques, and interviews were also transcribed, with accompanying notes where supporting threads were identified. These categorization processes laid the foundation for the data analysis that followed across the cases.

### *Within-Case Analysis*

Data analysis took place on two levels to accommodate the contrasts within the cases. The first level occurred within-case, whilst the second occurred across cases (Merriam, 1998).

Each case [in the within-case analysis] is first treated as a comprehensive case in and of itself. Data are gathered so the researcher can learn as much about the contextual variables as possible that might have a bearing on the case... Once the analysis of each case is compiled, cross-case analysis begins. A qualitative, inductive, multicase study seeks to build abstractions across cases (Merriam, 1998, pp. 194-195).

Each within-case analysis involved a review of documents, artifacts, observations, reflections, and interviews to produce a description of the case. The particulars of the case such as the setting, the participants, and a general timeline of events were captured in this description to contextualise it. In addition, the generative themes, ideas and issues were once again brought into focus and checked against the main research question: “How can visual arts teachers use artmaking to help students recognize, critically analyse and interpret their senses of self, place and community?” This process was to determine complementarity. The more discernible connections were selected whilst the less obvious ones were filtered out. Significantly too, the themes, ideas and issues were examined for their capacities to offer

palimpsestic renderings. The specifics of how the data was analyzed at the two sites are discussed below.

Chapter Four of this thesis addresses the Christchurch case study. In it, the meanings of individual student works are unpacked, using a process whereby the artworks are categorized according to the different art exercises, and further classified based on themes derived from the works, in relation to the students' interpretations of them. Within the chapter, the development of select student artworks is also tracked by examining the recurrent threads in their artworks. The within case analysis takes into consideration the ways that the class as a whole responded to the art exercises and contributes a set of wonderings about the possible implications that the findings might have for strengthening art teaching and learning in schools. My views and interpretations are implicated throughout this process.

Chapter Five of the thesis addresses the Kingston case study. Its structure is similar to that of Chapter Four, however, participant individual works are discussed in less detail and initially categorized according to the various art exercises only. The generative themes are then introduced in the within-case analysis, as well as a discussion of the impact that the study had on the teacher-trainees. In addition, it examines how the case broadly constitutes a re-mark on the ways that the teaching of artmaking at the secondary level may be conceptualized.

### ***Cross-Case Findings***

The cross-case findings brought into sharp focus two of the sub-questions that the study addressed: How might the work of the arts classroom serve to assist students in making sense of their personal and cultural selves? What qualities of the artmaking experience support student negotiation of their personal and cultural identities?

Data from the separate case studies was drawn upon to address these questions. Categories from either case were compared across cases and assessed for the potential to

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derive “naturalistic generalizations” (Stake, 1995; Creswell, 1998). Naturalistic generalizations are arrived at through “vicarious experiences so well constructed” (Stake, 1995, p. 85) that “people can learn from the case either for themselves or for applying it to a population of cases” (Creswell, 1998, p. 154).

The naturalistic generalizations from this cross-case analysis addressed the study’s final question: How might a conception of artmaking as place-making re-mark the ways in which the field of visual arts education participates in global processes? They are framed broadly as the following themes:

1. The intersection of sites and sights as meaningful and critical engagement.
2. The capacities held in artmaking to produce place-making.
3. Negotiations between strangeness and familiarity.
4. Art classrooms as safe spaces for productive exploration of “unsafe” ideas.

Part Two: Ethical Considerations and profiles of the participating institutions  
and participants

**Negotiating entry into the field**

**Ethics and politics of the study**

Hertz (1997) in Higgs (2008), states, “In all qualitative research, the researcher is inseparable from the process” (p. 548). The researcher’s background, perspectives, value systems and beliefs are therefore inextricably linked to the ways of knowing that they privilege and the knowledges they produce (Sikes, 2011). This strikes out the assumption that writing as a practice is innocent. Denzin (1994) reminds us, “in the social sciences there is only interpretation” (p. 500).

Ethics are therefore an integral part of the research process to avoid producing what Sikes (2011) refers to as “a colonizing discourse of the ‘other’” (p. 362). Case study researchers, as “guests in the private spaces of the world[s]” of those with whom they conduct research, therefore have a responsibility to exercise good manners and strict code of ethics (Stake, 2000 in Smith, 2007, p. 68).

To help ethically regulate such processes, The University of Canterbury’s Education Human Research Ethics Committee (EHREC) reviews all proposals involving educational settings and human participants to ensure that appropriate regard for ethical and cultural values are upheld. They require that all such research:

- has the informed consent of participants
- guarantees confidentiality of data and individuals
- avoids unnecessary deception
- minimizes risks to participants
- is consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi obligations

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Toward this end, I filed an application to EHREC that interwove the elements above with a detailed scope of the study, the methodology and the expected participants. With regards to obtaining informed consent, for the Christchurch site, permission was sought from the principal, the Head of Department, parents (in the cases of minors), the participants, and community members who were to be present. Similarly, for the Kingston site, informed consent was sought from the Head of School, the Head of Department, the teacher-trainees and a community member who would participate in the culminating project.

The consent and information forms provided to all participants in the research outlined potential issues of information disclosure that the participants could encounter through working collectively with their peers or external community members and how these would be managed. Having satisfactorily demonstrated how the study would be beneficial to the participants, and how my responsibilities would be toward the “subjects first, the study next, and [my]self last”, the application was approved (Smith, 2007, p. 68).

As indicated earlier, the study featured contrasting cases. The contrasts were apparent on a number of levels: through target group (students and teacher-trainees), locations (Christchurch and Kingston) and familiarity with the research setting (researcher far and researcher near). These differences warranted diverse strategies for negotiating entry into the research settings.

Participants were provided with information sheets and accompanying consent sheets to sign. The parents or guardians of the youth participants at the Christchurch site were also provided with information sheets and asked to give consent for their child's/ward's participation in the project. The forms explicitly outlined the voluntary nature of the study and the power the participants had to withdraw their participation at any given time without penalty. Also indicative of the rights of the participants was the supply of contact information for EHREC at The University of Canterbury, in the event that any participant needed to

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report or question anything they considered to be misconduct on my part during the project, or about which they were not comfortable communicating with me directly.

Anonymity is a grey area in qualitative research since its emergent orientation makes it difficult to predetermine what might happen amongst participants. For this reason, I stated expressly in the application that I could not guarantee complete anonymity. This was managed to some extent by participation in the study being dependent on the recommendation of the Head of the Art Department or by parents, in the case of minors.

Participants were also asked to sign an anonymity statement declaring that they would respect the privacy of the information shared by others in the study. In the case where collaboration was to be undertaken with the external community, I committed to managing the various stages of the project's development and to the implementation of intervention strategies where necessary to ensure that all parties participated in the project comfortably. Institutional and individual naming was also withheld in presentations of the case and through reports generated from the data. In these instances, pseudonyms were used to preserve anonymity. Additional efforts at preserving anonymity would include the application of artistic filters over photographs where the participants were discernible. Participants were also to receive a copy of the general research findings and recommendations.

During June and July, I had a few after-school meetings with Neila, the head of the art department at the Christchurch site to learn about the art department, explain the vision, objectives and methods of the study, and to familiarize myself with the artroom space and resources that were available to facilitate the study. In August of 2012, a mixed gender grouping of twenty-eight students joined the project. From August through December, I undertook visual arts workshops with this group in the art classroom during regular school hours.

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During the first three months, the activities were individual in nature and based on student interests, their philosophies, and the ways they perceived themselves physically and metaphorically. Over the remaining two months, the activities were more collaborative, calling upon them to jointly unpack their definitions and experiences of community. To supplement the information yielded through these activities, the participants were asked to identify and interview a respected member of their community to ascertain their views of community and provide intergenerational perspectives of the issues that contribute to a sense of place. Three parents completed these interviews.

As a culminating activity the students participated in a mural project to celebrate the community that had developed over the project period. The original plan for this culminating project was to also involve community members, chosen by the students and approved by their parents, in its execution. However, this proved challenging given unanticipated school interruptions, time constraints and an underestimation of the complexities that its facilitation entailed.

With regards to the Kingston site, due to geographical differences, physical meetings prior to the start of the study were limited. To mitigate this, correspondence with the vice principal, head of school and head of the art department at the institution was done primarily by email. The necessary information sheets and consent forms were sent by email for the head of department's consent regarding the department's involvement with the project and for her to mediate the distribution of the information sheets and consent forms to the potential participants on my behalf. Signed copies of these were scanned and sent to me by email. Once I arrived in Jamaica, the email conversations were supplemented with face-to-face sessions to work out the logistics of the program.

A meeting with the teacher-trainees who had expressed interest in the project was also held to confirm the number of participants and to solidify the workshop schedule. This

meeting was additionally intended to clarify the aims and requirements of the project, and determine its mutual benefits for the participants and myself. Arriving at a schedule that could suit all the interested parties proved challenging, therefore a flexible schedule was adapted wherein all parties did not necessarily participate in all sessions. A fluctuating group of six to thirteen participants joined the study over a two-week period. On the last day of the project, an invited member of the arts community joined us to share in a collaborative art project centred on the theme, ‘community.’

### **Insider/Outsider Dimensions**

Skepticism endures with regard to the researcher’s position in relation to the research setting and has produced what Mannay (2010) refers to as “narratives of insider and outsider myths” (p. 91). “Insiders are often charged with presenting their group in an unrealistically favourable light” whilst “outsider myths assert that only researchers who possess the necessary objectivity and emotional distance from the field are able to conduct valid research on a given group” (Mannay, 2010, p. 91). Fine’s (1994) notion of the hyphen at which “self-other joins in the politics of everyday life” provides a productive framework to overcome these binaries and to capture the complex and multi-faceted experiences that their relational readings provide (p. 70).

In this study I was an outsider to the Christchurch case and an insider to the Kingston case. In the former capacity, the country and educational settings were new to me. Though I had years of experience teaching visual arts at the secondary levels of the education system, there were now new cultural and stylistic barriers to be negotiated. The participants in the study had multiple ethnic identities: they identified as Pākehā, European, Chinese, Korean, Middle-Eastern, South East Asian and Māori. This presented bi-cultural and cross-cultural implications since the curriculum requires diligence to the Treaty of Waitangi obligations and cultural sensitivity more generally. Care had to be taken therefore to respond to the



participants' cultural identities in authentic ways, avoiding tendencies toward essentialization and exoticisation.

In addition, my status as outsider extended beyond my nationality to my role as researcher, and outsider to the school faculty itself. I was on borrowed time in a borrowed space, operating in a period designated for their regular class schedules. The participants, therefore, had no obligation to be responsive to the research agenda. These factors raised potential risks to the nature of the relationship that I was able to develop with the participants; I had to earn their trust over time. The advantage of this outsider position, however, was that I was attuned to the particularities of the case. Since it was unfamiliar ground I was compelled to open myself as a learner to all aspects of the situation.

The Kingston site reflected my former professional location and as such, I was known to a few of the participants. This could privilege a ready-made premise for openness and cooperation. Despite the obvious advantages, my familiarity with the territory and my preconceived notions of its operations could also potentially cause me to take for granted the subtle meanings that emerged in the research process.

Additionally, in spite of my prior experience in the setting, the fact that I was operating in the capacity of a researcher could engender feelings of vulnerability in the participants, or fear that their perspectives and inputs would be publicly criticized. Consequently, it could therefore influence the information shared, generating tension between what students perceived to be appropriate responses and how they might have responded within ordinary circumstances.

## Profile of Christchurch Institution and Participants



Figure 2 Situating the Christchurch Study

### Case Selection: Secondary School in Christchurch

To design the Christchurch case study, I initially drew upon the expertise of my supervisors and their familiarity with the secondary school contexts in New Zealand. As a foreigner to the country, I saw this as being advantageous, as their contacts could potentially set the stage for my entry into the field, especially if I were to work with members of indigenous communities.

On this premise we commenced a series of discussions on the demographics, age range, and gender characteristics that were important to the study. To refine these particularities I consulted Education Review Office (Education Review Office, 2006, 2010) reports to familiarize myself with their evaluations and reports on the education and care of students in individual schools, and consequently, to select schools wherein the school population was of lower socio-economic status and contained higher percentages of indigenous populations. Due to the in-depth investigation that the study required, I decided to limit its implementation to the geographic region of Christchurch, where I live and would therefore find accessible (Fig. 2). I identified two schools that ranked “low-decile” according

to the New Zealand's decile ranking system. Decile refers to the socio-economic status of the communities where the schools are located and usually reflects the ethnic diversity of their populations. Decile numbers run from 1 to 10, with lower decile numbers indicating lower socioeconomic status, and higher numbers, higher socio economic status.

The succeeding step was to send letters to their principals, outlining the nature of the research and requesting permission to undertake the study in their schools. My attempts at entry into these schools were unsuccessful, as they said their workloads could not accommodate me at the time. This was a challenging time for schools across Christchurch, as many schools were in the process of restructuring following the February 2011 earthquakes.

It was then that a colleague suggested that I contact her school as a possible research site. Her school was a high decile school. At first, I was hesitant because it lacked the features that I was interested in targeting at the other sites, such as greater ethnic diversity, and a population that reflected obviously marginalized youth. However, I decided to look again at the context to examine how its particularities could serve to enrich the study.

An examination revealed that studies attuned to understanding identity-related issues were often conducted with marginalized communities, and this practice could lead to continuous deficit theorizing. Despite the fact that the students at the newly considered site site enjoyed a higher socio-economic status, all adolescents are developmentally inclined to be grappling with identity-related issues, and the inclusion of school communities that were atypical of prior research groups could serve to broaden existing understandings.

With confidence that there was much to glean from this context, I proceeded to contact the principal and outline the objectives and nature of the research. She then referred me to the Head of the Art Department, who was very responsive to my request. We subsequently had a series of meetings and discussions over the telephone, through email and in person about the particularities of the project. Once the art department head was satisfied

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that the project would be beneficial to the school and her department in particular, we identified a research project, determined the duration of the study, and ironed out details such as scheduling, resource lists, and curriculum.

The case is located at a state co-educational secondary school in a suburb of Christchurch. The school's service region covers parts of Northwestern Christchurch. It is amongst the country's six largest schools, and offers educational access for students from years 9 to 13. The campus features well-maintained grounds, classrooms, administrative buildings, gyms, a canteen, a pool, an auditorium, several sports fields and courts. Its gender composition is almost even, with 53% girls and 47% boys.

While the diversity of the school population is on the rise, the majority of current students identify ethnically as Pākehā (of European heritage) New Zealanders. The school prides itself on the high standards of achievement it continues to enjoy in the National Certificates of Education Achievement (NCEA) and its success in cultural and sporting activities at the national and international levels. The visual and performing arts are also considered to be strengths of the school.

The visual arts department is situated at the rear of the campus. It is large, vibrant, and well-equipped, featuring a number of classroom spaces and display walls. It offers specialist classes in the areas of design, painting, sculpture, photography and printmaking. The teachers are leaders in their various fields of art education in New Zealand. At the year nine level, students within this department attend hourly sessions once or twice per week, alternately. Visual arts education is also mandatory at this level. In the following year, students have the option to continue with the subject or choose another discipline.

The classroom where the case study was conducted featured a mix of grey and wood chipped walls. It included a printing press, hanging racks for prints, cabinets and shelves for books, materials and tools, an LCD projector, a dry erase board, minimal display space for

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student work, and five rectangular working tables arranged in an L shape with stools and the capacity to accommodate six students each. One wall of the room was primarily comprised of glass windows, and like the door at the rear of the class, overlooked a concrete courtyard.

August 2012 marked the commencement of a five-month visual arts workshop with the visual arts class at this NZ secondary school. Using a range of contemporary art exemplars, two-dimensional art techniques, and discussion activities, the participants created a range of artworks that represented their interests—how they see themselves and what they understand the role of communities to be. The concept of community/place was used a framework for promoting personal empowerment, shared cultural understandings and ultimately to help student negotiation of their senses of self, place and community.

Due to the social nature of my research questions, I drew upon a qualitative research orientation to gain an understanding of how high school students recognize and interpret their senses of place. Such a research framework was useful for accommodating the various methods I employed such as participant observation, unstructured interviews, art critiques, photo and video diaries and questionnaires. It also allowed for the examination of images that the students produced in relation to popular culture and contemporary society as a whole.

These methods served to illuminate the participants' experiences of self as social entity. Over the course of the workshops, the sources of information collected from the participants included sketches, artworks and visual and verbal journals. I facilitated all of the workshops. The Head of Department however furnished most of the resources for the project, and provided occasional assistance with the distribution of materials. She also, on occasion, helped students to hone their ideas.

### ***Research Participants***

The negotiation for entry into the New Zealand school began with a formal request to the principal for permission to undertake the study there. She then passed on the request to

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the Head of the Art Department, who later nominated the participants from her year 9 art class based on their willingness to participate in the project. Information sheets with accompanying consent forms were supplied to the students who expressed their interest in the study, and due to their status as minors, a formal request was also made of their parents or guardians to confirm their participation.

One hundred percent of the responses received were positive. Participants ranged from 13-14 years old. Of the 28 participants, 17 were female and 11 were male. They represented various types of ethnicities: 57% NZ European/Pakeha, 4% Other European, 7% Chinese, 7% Other Asian; 4% Southeast Asian, 4% Indian, 7% Middle Eastern, 7% Afghani, and 4% Maori. During the workshops, participants drew upon their personal experiences to create artworks that spoke to their personal and collective identities.

### **Profile of Kingston Institution and Participants**



Figure 3 Situating the Kingston Case Study

The Kingston case study (Fig. 3) was similar to the Christchurch case with the obvious exception of its geographical and cultural locations. More specifically, it differed from the Christchurch course through its focus on teacher-trainees rather than on adolescent students. This research strategy allowed for a broader, more generalized understanding of the

research question, since the inquiry also targets appropriate pedagogical strategies for a place making art curriculum.

My previous experience as a lecturer at Arthur's College<sup>8</sup> served as an advantage in negotiating entry to carry out the case study there. Initial consultation began formally with the vice principal of academic studies, the dean of the school and the head of the art education department. Once clearance for the project was received, my negotiations continued with the head of department through a series of email discussions regarding the particularities of year group, gender, and experience that I had hoped to include in the study, as well as her interests for the experience. To refine these particularities, we examined the schedules for the various year groups, and the logistics of the project, including the timing that would enable quality participation by those involved.

The Kingston case was conducted at a well-known tertiary institution in the island's capital that is responsible for training most of the visual arts educators in the secondary schools. The site boasts a long history of outstanding achievement in the arts and of producing some of the island's notable artists. The campus features administrative, academic, and leisure spaces with a few artworks in the form of murals or sculptures scattered throughout.

The rooms allotted for art education are spaces that double as classroom spaces for other subject disciplines, since teaching/learning spaces on the campus are limited. The nature of art production makes this shared aspect of the space challenging. The art education department, nonetheless, is a growing one, owing largely to the security that comes with the teaching profession, as well as the government's mandate that all teachers possess a bachelor's degree in education. The workshops were conducted in three distinct rooms: the first was technologically equipped; the second, a discussion space, and the third, a computer

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<sup>8</sup> Arthur's College is a pseudonym used in this research to protect the identity of the institution. Likewise, all the participants affiliated with this institution have also been given pseudonyms to ensure their anonymity.

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room. Each offered different advantages. Across the three spaces were a range of resources, including an LCD projector, a smart board, long workshop type tables, display spaces, and desktop computers.

January 2013 marked the commencement of a two-week intensive visual arts workshop with the teacher-trainees at this Kingston tertiary institution, outside of scheduled class hours. Using two-dimensional art techniques, local content, discussion and drama activities, the participants created a range of artworks that represented their interests, their perceptions of self, and their understandings of the role of schools and communities of learning. The concept of community/place carried over from the Christchurch case as a framework for promoting personal empowerment, shared cultural understandings, and ultimately, to ascertain how they located their senses of place. The qualitative nature of the study supported the understanding of \*artmaking strategies that teachers of the visual arts may draw upon to help secondary school students recognize and interpret their senses of self, place and community.

### ***Research Participants***

When the Head of the Art Department issued the call for the Jamaican research participants, much interest was expressed in the project. At this stage, however, only three respondents committed to the study. Follow-up negotiations commenced with my arrival in Jamaica, including a general meeting with all the teacher-trainees in the art education department to discuss the objectives of the study, and how it might be mutually beneficial for all involved.

The teacher-trainees were asked to share their stories of involvement with art education, including their motivations, experiences, philosophies, and how they imagined the project might accommodate their pedagogical interests. These sharings revealed that most of them were emerging teachers but there were also a few that had previous classroom



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experience. The latter had enrolled in the degree program both to update their pedagogical understandings, and to fulfill the government mandate for all teachers to possess a bachelor's degree.

Subsequently, 18 participants, with varying levels of teaching experience and representing Years 2-4 (beginning to final year phases), confirmed their interest in participating in the study. Participants ranged from 22-54 years old. Of the 18 participants, 12 were female and 6 were male. All participants shared a common ethnicity, namely, 94% Jamaican/Black; and 6% Other Caribbean/Black.

### **Boundaries of the Research**

Given that this study provides in-depth qualitative examinations of two particular educational sites, the results are not generalizable. It is presumed that the results will have implications for other studies of this nature; it is not meant to generalize what might happen in other contexts and with other participants. The study, therefore, does not aim to be a definitive or comparative qualitative study of art education in New Zealand and Jamaica, but rather, offers a rich description of these particular sites, the curriculum undertaken, and the participants involved with the study. These qualitative snapshots serve to illuminate the specific artmaking experiences in the lives of the participants in specific moments in time and place.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Survey of Marks and Re-Marks: Review of Literature and Conceptual Framework**

#### **Introduction**

The preceding chapter introduced the research methodology and outlined the particularities of the research, including the research sites, research participants, research design and methods used for data collection and analysis. This chapter weaves together the literature that contextualizes the research problem, and provides the theoretical base of the study. It does so by drawing widely on theories, concepts and practices from a number of academic disciplines and traditions to answer the main research question: How can visual arts teachers use artmaking to help adolescent students to recognize, critically analyse and interpret their senses of self, place and community?

There are three relevant dimensions that anchor this work. They are: Walker's (2001) Artmaking Model, visual culture, and place-conscious pedagogical practices. These are discussed in greater detail below, especially as it concerns the way they serve in teasing apart the complexities that are at the heart of the research question. Each of these are considered as re-marks in the 'palimpsestic' way of "both eras[ing] and retain[ing] the past" (Tavin, 2005, p. 5). Their layering and juxtaposition contributes the conceptual framework that underpins this study.

The chapter is divided into two parts according to the dimensions above. Part One addresses the role and relevance of visual arts education. It identifies Walker's (2001) Artmaking Model as a significant approach that clarifies how visual arts education may be facilitated to more closely resemble the practices of contemporary artists, thus infusing the

subject with more relevance and making it more meaningful to students' lives. It also examines the role of visual culture in enabling an understanding of the networked society in which we live, and as a tool to help us make sense of the world. Part Two introduces theories of place as multidimensional constructs that tease apart how our emplacement is implicated in the possibilities we imagine for ourselves, and helps to legitimize our 'ways of being' in the world. The strands from the various practices, concepts and theories are also woven together to develop the conceptual framework for this study.

In addition to the literature provided in this chapter, other relevant literature is addressed elsewhere throughout the thesis.

## Part One: Role and Relevance of Art Education

### **Role and Relevance of Art Education**

This research participates in a longstanding tradition of examining the capacities held within arts education to respond to significant contemporary concerns. This tradition has been significantly framed in Efland's (1990) book titled, *A History of Art Education: Intellectual and Social Currents in Teaching the Visual Arts*, which provides an in-depth historical perspective of art education throughout Western history. In it, he also examines the social contexts that helped to shape the field as well as the ways these histories have influenced present concepts of art education. Davis (2005) also contributes to the tradition by examining the “generative tensions” between justification and celebration that embed the field, in order to more actively incite discussion on the ways that the arts provide a template for education, generally.

The United Nations Scientific Cultural Organization UNESCO (2006) meanwhile, has published a *Road Map for Arts Education*, that is consistent with Davis' (2005) view that the arts serve education broadly. The Road Map was developed out of UNESCO's 2006 World Conference on Arts Education in Lisbon, Portugal, as a comprehensive response to questions regarding the aims of art education. Given the challenges to cultural diversity posed by globalization, it positions art education at the heart of efforts to improve the quality of education generally, by asserting, “creative and cultural development should be the basic function of education” (p. 3). Whilst the map offers a template for the introduction and promotion of art education it is not seen as being exhaustive in its coverage but rather open to adaptation and expansion where necessary to suit the needs of specific contexts.

Quality education, as defined by the Road Map, “provides learners with the locally-relevant abilities required for them to function successfully in their society,” “is appropriate to “students’ lives, aspirations and interests, as well as those of their families and societies,” and is “inclusive and rights-based” (p. 6). The goals of this research find synchronicity with this conceptual framework as it acknowledges the fact that learning must begin with the familiar and respond to the needs of learners in order for the outcome to be substantive.

### **Walker’s Artmaking Model**

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, this work also grew out of my exposure to Walker’s (2001) model that presented artmaking as a substantive engagement with meaning making. The model evolved from an investigation into the practices of contemporary artists, and utilizes “big ideas as a conceptual centerpiece that is elaborated by other elements such as personal connections, knowledge, artmaking problems, and boundaries” (Walker, 2004b, p. 7). The major contribution of this model is its demystification of the artmaking process for art teachers. It presents enabling curriculum structures to assist students to undertake artmaking in purposeful ways that facilitate connections to their personal lives and situates these connections within wider artmaking practice and universal concerns.

Walker (2001) describes big ideas as “broad, important human issues...characterized by complexity, ambiguity, contradiction, and multiplicity” (p. 1). In accordance, utilizing the big idea as a conceptual anchor for artmaking presents a platform for engagement with deeper level thinking, through the way it gives focus to the endeavor but is broad enough to accommodate multiple entry points. Utilizing the big idea as a conceptual anchor for artmaking then, serves to expand its focus beyond creating an interesting design, knowing how to manipulate media or acquiring particular skills. Rather, it centers the artmaking on the interests and lives of students and helps them to make sense of their relationships to others

and the world. The model is drawn upon in Chapter Five of this thesis to provide a focus for the teacher-trainees' artmaking and to facilitate personal and cultural connections to the endeavor.

### **Visual Culture as Intertextuality of Places**

The omnipresence of 'the visual' today serves as an acknowledgement of the potency of images, and visual culture theory provides a useful scaffold to help students further make sense of their relationships with their communities and the world. The visual embodies sites/cites/sights for interaction, negotiation and decoding of society's shifting paradigms, contributing to what many call visual culture. Jagodinski, as cited in Tavin (2005), offers the following definitions for sites, cites and sights respectively: "that which is feelable," "that which is sayable," and; "that which is seeable" (p. 5). Hence, the feelable, sayable and seeable combine to create an intertextuality that is "not just part of our everyday lives, it *is* our everyday lives" (Mirzoeff, 1999 in Darts, 2004, p. 315). For clarification, Wilson (2003) offers this explanation:

In contemporary visual culture images are like an enormous patch of grass, continually spreading by sending out new shoots, new roots and by broadcasting seeds. The images not only come to rest momentarily alongside one another, they interweave and fuse, producing endless variations. Every image...carries with it the residue of other images. But this is not all; every image, it seems, may be related to any other image, any other text, any other idea through our interpretations. Art teaching today exists in the era of intertextuality (p. 122).

Several definitions have been proposed for this phenomenon called visual culture but none are exhaustive as the field is organic (Duncum, 2001). "Like art...visual culture is destined to remain an essentially contested concept open to multiple definitions, changing boundaries, and normative disputations" (Wilson, 2003, p. 108). Duncum (2001), suggests

that it “focus[es] on ways of seeing and an expanded range of visual artifacts that lie beyond the art institution” (p. 104).

Freedman (2003) describes visual culture as “all that is humanly formed and sensed through vision or visualization and shapes the way we live our lives” (p.1). Tavin (2005) proposes that it “include[s] an inclusive register of images, artifacts, objects...as well as the experience of networked and mediated subjects in a globalized 21<sup>st</sup> century engaged in ‘permanent’ war on terror” (p. 17). The given definitions, though varied in their emphases, concern the visual and the social conditions that inform our understandings of them. What is particularly useful to note however, is that visual culture is both ‘new’ and ‘newly coloured.’ Its newness is attributable to the:

current inventory of images and technologies associated with global virtual culture, new relationships between humans and their experience as networked subjects, new levels of theorizing about visibility...[It is considered as] newly coloured in part because of previous work in art education dealing with the relationship between popular culture, new media, and social theory...(Tavin, 2005, p. 5).

Descriptions such as ‘pervasive’, ‘ubiquitous’ and ‘overwhelming’ have become synonymous with the term visual culture, signifying the “artistic renaissance” our society is experiencing (Freedman, 2003, p. 20). Interestingly, foresight of this renaissance was declared as early as the 1960s. McLuhan (1964) predicted, “we are now at the point where the medium is truly the message. That medium is visual” (in Anderson, 2003, p. 7).

In concurrence, Lanier (1969) made a case for new art curricula that esteemed the study of popular culture as armory for this revolution that was taking place socially. His case reflects his philosophy that art education “must engage the ‘guts and hopes’ of youngsters [and] give the art class a share in the process of exploring social relationships” (p. 314).

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Accordingly, he explained that through the study of such relationships students might be better equipped with the capacity to unpack controversial social issues by which their lifeworlds are marked and the classroom, in turn, would become relevant to their lives.

McFee (1961) also addresses the acquisition of cultural meaning through the study of everyday sites. She declared:

Considering the impact of television, motion pictures, and all other visual means of learning about the culture, it seems important for children to realize that all this visual learning is going on, so that they can learn to be discriminating about what they accept...Critical analysis is necessary if a realistic, rather than exaggerated, version of our culture is to be maintained (p. 23).

While both Lanier and McFee advocate for mediation between society and popular culture, and shared inclusive views of the visual arts, they held contrasting perspectives on the value of popular culture. On the one hand, Lanier (1966) thought it necessary to embrace popular culture to engage the “appreciational milieu” of students thereby making art education meaningful to them (in Tavin, 2005, p. 7). On the other hand, McFee viewed popular culture as being harmful, and its study as “an effective way of cultivating a discriminating... aesthetic taste as a defense against [its] influence...” (in Tavin, 2005, p. 10).

The ideas espoused by Lanier and McFee continue to have resonance today. Advocates of the movement bemoan the fact that, though the field has benefited from previous efforts to legitimate popular culture as the object of critical study in art education, our schools have been slow to embrace the field. This has led to questions such as, “Can we afford to ignore the forces underlying the movement toward visual culture? (Wilson, 2003, p. 109). The responses to this question undeniably and unequivocally lie in the negative realm. This is because “the future belongs to images...” (Heller, 1996 in Green, 2000, p. 24). Such



sentiments are justified by the idea that being able to read and interpret the constructed environment and its visual signs is critical to the successful navigation of contemporary culture (Anderson, 2003). Consequently, the neglect of such forms of literacy only serves to further distance one from the imagery that is most impressionable for youths, and that informs their subjectivities (Tavin & Hausman, 2004).

The challenge is, then, for teachers to recognize that through the facilitation of forums that provide students with a deeper understanding of their visual experiences, they might become more critically aware of the mediatory role that the visual plays in influencing society, culture and identity (Freedman, 2003). In like manner, they will begin "...to think critically about their own and their group's actions and who they are empowering or disenfranchising through their personal lives, actions, and work..." (Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr, 2001, p. 6).

As mentioned previously, the field of visual culture is not without contestations. Despite the acknowledgement that the ubiquitousness and import of imagery today is unparalleled in history, there continue to be skeptics of its agenda. It received critique in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by members of the Frankfurt school as "a form of psychoanalysis in reverse; that is, instead of curing socially induced neuroses, [popular] culture produced it" (Giroux, 1992 in Tavin, 2005, p. 103).

In accordance, one of the main criticisms has been the way visual culture undoes the distinctions—that have existed for thousands of years—between high and low forms of art. Within this vein, high art and culture were considered the spheres where autonomy and creativity abounded. Conversely, the critics regarded low art and visual culture as being parasitic and representative of a dumbing down of high culture (Adorno, 2001; Giroux, 1992; Giroux & Simon, 1989; MacDonald, 1957). These "ghosts of the past" still 'haunt' the field today (Tavin, 2005, p. 105).

The evolving disputations (Dorn, 2004; Eisner, 2001; Kamhi, 2003; Smith, 2003), continue to position popular culture as a “corrupting force that harms true culture, appeals to the lowest common denominator, and reduces the overall quality of the arts” (Tavin, 2005, p. 106). Still, others disregard visual culture for the inherently political character for which it is most popular today. Respectively, they see the field as “the end of art” (Dorn, 2004); “content for political and social analysis” (Eisner, 2001); “[a] scapegoat for the new breed of art educators” (Kamhi, 2003); and “inherently talk-oriented” (Smith, 2003).

As the criticisms and efforts to maintain the traditional high/low dichotomies of art continue, advocates of visual culture are just as resolute in their efforts to advance the ideas espoused by the field. Freire’s (1973) challenge is particularly useful in this ongoing pursuit of acknowledgement and validation. He said:

Perhaps the greatest tragedy of contemporary society is people’s domination by the myths and manipulations by modern ideological and commercial advertising. If calculated manipulations of culturally constructed symbols by ideological and pecuniary forces go unchecked it will result in the loosening of the associative structure of society” (in Anderson, 2003, p. 23).

Likewise, Anderson (2003) advises that students’ honing of skills to critically engage with visual culture and contemporary themes not only serves them as individuals but this also has far reaching implications for society as a whole. In support, Darts (2004) challenges those in the field to move beyond the celebration and pleasure in the everyday toward a position where students are equipped and motivated to “interpret, evaluate and ‘rewrite’ the shared symbols of their everyday visual experiences” (p. 325). He sees this as a means whereby educators may empower young people to transcend their roles as passive spectators and engage in more active and expressive forms of inquiry that explore the sociopolitical realm.

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Through such participatory means, he envisions that students will develop the capacity to address the disparities and injustices of the status quo.

This ‘rewriting’ process, Tavin and Hausman (2004) concur, is a way for:

Art teachers [to] begin to unpack the social and cultural roots and consequences of globalization and, with their students, imagine new opportunities... In sum, art educators can attempt to understand the complexities and interconnections between globalized phenomena and then act in ways that would enrich and better realize human potentialities (p. 48).

The big picture for proponents of visual culture in education (Duncum, 2001; Freedman, 2003; Tavin, 2003), then, is revealing that the visual is inextricably linked to “ongoing social, political, psychological, and cultural struggles.” Also, that “these struggles occur on numerous cultural fronts and through multiple visual media...” (Darts, 2004, p. 315). In so doing, art classrooms will be transformed into "crucial sites for discussing issues raised by global culture" and students of visual culture [can begin to imagine] "alternative projects of social existence" (Duncum, 2001, p. 12). Freedman (2003) posits that through this medium students will “develop an understanding of the rich social life of visual culture” (p. 42). Consequently, they will begin to address the concerns put forward by Anderson (2003) as critical concerns of visual culture studies: “What is real? How can we tell? What does real mean?” (p. 22).

## Part Two: Theories of Place

### **The Concept of Place**

The answers to the questions above are arguably dependent on the contexts which they address and as such fittingly align with the research premise that “nothing we do is unplaced” (Casey, 1997, p. ix), and, as such, the study of place “can be brought to bear on the grand complexities that plague the world (Geertz, 1996, p. 262). It follows then, that an understanding of how visual arts education may best serve the construction of students’ identities requires consideration of how human identity is bound to place. But what exactly is place?

Definitions of place position it as, “being-in-the-world” (Casey, 1993), “a habitual site of human activity” (Brey, 1998), and “a territory of meanings” (Relph, 1993). Central to each of these definitions is the weaving together of human-environment interactions into a reciprocal relationship where places make people and people make places. Whilst these definitions contain truths, Cajete (1999) would argue against the anthropocentric stance they promote through their tendency to “concentrate primarily on human interests when relating to the natural world” (cited in Manning, 2008, p. 46). He calls this sensibility biophobia and attributes it to the epistemological orientation of most western institutions in contrast to the biophilic core of indigenous knowledge systems. For the purposes of this inquiry, the scope is narrowed to human-place interactions, those that constitute the constructed environment of the classroom space.

Another important consideration in the explication of place is the way it is contrasted with space. Though interdependent, the meaning of one is dependent on what the other is not. (Tuan, 1977) offers a useful unpacking of this dichotomy by revealing, “What begins as

undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value” (p.

6). This therefore positions place as being associated with ‘security’ whereas space is associated with a sense of ‘freedom’. This aligns with Freire’s (1996) declaration that:

People as beings “in situation”, find themselves rooted in temporal spatial conditions which mark them and which they also mark. They will tend to reflect on their own situationality to the extent that they are challenged by it to act upon it. Human beings are because they are in situation. And they will be more the more they not only critically reflect upon their existence but critically act upon it (p. 90).

These ideas lay the foundation for inquiring into the ways that places and the visual arts are dialogic and how their intersection may engender senses of self, place and community. They are manifested in the territory of meanings that are embedded in the place of the art classroom and in the ways they contribute to the development of student identities. Ashcroft (2001) suggests that such meanings “are intimately bound up with the culture and identity of its inhabitants” and hence reveal the fact that experiences in a place are also impacted by relationships in other places (p. 156). Bronfenbrenner (1979) offers a useful ecological model of human development (see Fig. 4) supporting this interrelation of meanings and the social systems that constitute them. The model has been translated into the graphic form below:

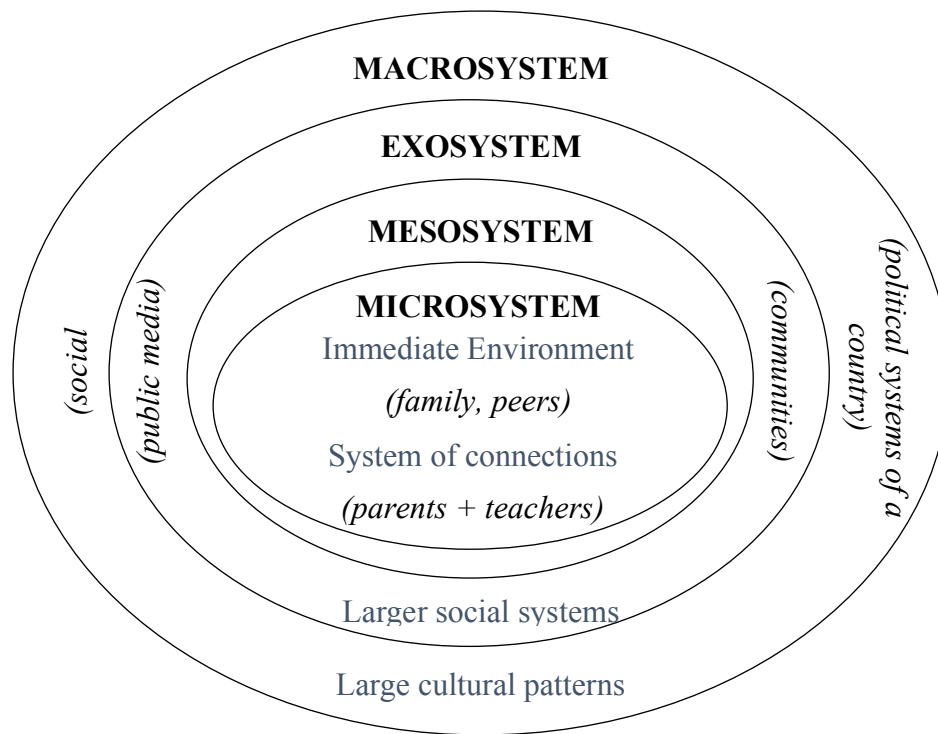


Figure 4 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model of Human Development

The nested, interrelated structures present in this model allude to the fact that knowledge does not exist in a vacuum. This is antithetical to the way that many lower secondary school artmaking experiences are framed today, with an emphasis on the formal qualities of the artwork as disparate from the cultural realities of the students. This gap brings into focus ideas espoused by John Dewey (1980) in his book, *Art as Experience*, for its encompassing view of the web of relations that constitute meaning. He stated, “in order to understand the meaning of artistic products, we have to forget them for a time, to turn aside from them and have recourse to the ordinary forces and conditions of experience that we do not usually regard as esthetic” (p. 4)

A corollary of this line of thought is that just as experience is necessary to frame an understanding of the art product, so too, the meaningful making of art requires that we draw

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upon our experiences in order to valorize them. Therefore, art teachers who focus on the microsystem of the art room without facilitating bridges to students' lifeworlds have shortchanged students of meaningful opportunities to consider the larger complexities of life. Given this premise, postcolonial literature offers illumination of the territories of meaning marking the cultural identities of the contexts under study.

### **Postcolonialism**

Postcolonialism as described by Young (2001):

Commemorates not only the colonial but the triumph over it. The 'post' marks the many remarkable victories that should not be allowed to fade into amnesia of history. The postcolonial era in its name pays tribute to the great historical achievements of resistance against colonial power, while paradoxically, it also describes the conditions of existence that have followed in which many basic power structures have yet to change in any substantive way. The origins of postcolonialism lie in the historical resistance to colonial occupation and imperial control, the success of which then enabled a radical challenge to the political and conceptual structures of the systems on which such domination had been based (p. 60).

Postcolonialism has been considered a relevant dimension for this inquiry since the subjectivities of both New Zealand and Jamaica have been partially constituted by the power of European colonialism. It also serves a useful role in framing the ways that both contexts have engaged in resisting colonialist ideologies and legacies. Colonizer/colonized relations thus "become the medium in which and out of which culture, language, society and consciousness get constructed" (Barker, Hulme, & Iverson, 1996, p. 26). As pointed out by Young (2001), these constructions are further complicated by the perpetuation of colonial legacies under new guises but with the same underlying agendas today.

Accordingly, they serve as grounds for challenging the 'neutrality' of places and

therefore render places as profoundly pedagogical (Gruenewald & Smith, 2008). This dimension's utility then, is the analysis that it lends to an understanding of the ways that power structures have been and continue to be present in our conceptions of visual arts education across these contexts. Bhabha's (1990) and Greenwood's (1999) contributions have framed these complexities through concepts such as hybridity and ambivalence that are central to postcolonial discourse. Bhabha (1990) contends, "all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity" (p. 211).

It is from this theoretical position that Bhabha cautions against ideas of fixity and the preoccupation with conceiving identity purely in binary colonial terms. He sees hybridity as "the process by which the colonial governing authority undertakes to translate the identity of the colonized (*the Other*) within a singular universal framework, but then fails producing something familiar but new" (Papastergiadis, 1997). Greenwood, like Bhabha (1994) is interested in the "spaces between" apparent contradictions and the openings they create where "something begins its presencing" (in Greenwood 1999, p. 151). She reads these emergent spaces as invitations for "accommodations, contestations and transformations of consciousness" (Greenwood, 1999, p. v).

Both Greenwood and Bhabha refer to this space of ambivalence as the third space and acknowledge its productivity in deconstructing colonial silences. Where they differ, however, is in Greenwood's move beyond analysis to locate ways to productively deal with the silences. She does so mainly through drama processes. Like Greenwood, the aim of this research is to identify dynamic ways that the artmaking process may be put to use in helping students negotiate their senses of self, place and community. To put this into context, the histories of New Zealand and Jamaica will be explored to identify the impact of colonialism, and how it has re-marked visual arts education contexts in each locale.



### ***New Zealand Inheritances***

The *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* or *Treaty of Waitangi* (1840) is the founding document of Aotearoa/New Zealand. It was signed by representatives of the British Crown and Māori Chiefs from New Zealand. How well the intent of that Treaty has been (and continues to be) applied by a succession of settler State governments, however, remains a subject of contestation. In light of this ongoing colonial struggle, it should be noted that conflicting notions of the Treaty relationship have led to the emergence of competing notions of ‘biculturalism’ as a means for contemporary new Zealand society to make sense of the Treaty relationship between Māori tribes and those settlers (from around the world) that arrived as migrants under the cloak of the crown. “New Zealand teachers accept employment on the understanding that they will deliver a curriculum as laid down by government statute” (Smith, 2010, p. 58).

For example, the Crown’s principles for action on the Treaty of Waitangi are embedded within *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007), and are “expressed ... in terms of the bicultural partnership between European and Māori that is at the core of [the] nation’s founding document...” (Smith, 2010, p. 61). The vision is for young people “who will work to create an Aotearoa<sup>9</sup> New Zealand in which Māori and Pākehā... recognize each other as full treaty partners, and in which all cultures are valued for the contributions they bring.” This vision was reiterated in the *Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2000), with emphasis on students being oriented to the significance, value, and contexts of traditional Māori art forms.

### **Visual Arts Education as a Site of Resistance**

Just as the ‘neutrality’ of places is questionable, so too is the notion of the ‘passivity’ of education. Smith (2007) concurs that education “manipulates as much as it is manipulated

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<sup>9</sup> Aotearoa, translated as “land of the long white cloud”, is the Māori name for New Zealand.

and reflects specific contexts” (p. 76). An examination of the development of education in New Zealand affirms the complexities Smith describes. Since the objective of British settlement of New Zealand was to reproduce British society, education was a useful arm that the Empire used to sustain its ideologies. An important part of this retention process was the establishment of dichotomies such as colonizer/colonized, master/subject.

(Wilmott, 1989) alluded to this brainwashing of children to believe that New Zealand was an outpost of Britain, and that Māori were not genuine citizens of the country. These social distinctions proved necessary to legitimate British claims to political and social power, and provide support for the *1877 Education Act*, wherein the stated objective was “to create an obedient, disciplined and industrial labour force which would enhance the economic prosperity of the country” (O'Neill, Clark, & Openshaw, 2004 in Smith, 2007, )

The first national curriculum in New Zealand was the 1878 Standards Syllabus, which included subjects that closely mirrored to the British model. Art was one such subject and it proved to be a major instrument of colonization and cultural imperialism. Its instrumentality, mainly through drawing, was to ensure competence in design, for the purposes of competing with international rivals in manufacturing. The value of art then had more to do with economics than with cultural expression.

Whilst the fine arts thrived in Societies of Art, a utilitarian approach was taken to art education, and this stance continued throughout the nineteenth century. The fine arts were therefore the preserve of the upper class while the more utilitarian and practical arts were assigned working class value. At the turn of the century, when secondary education became central to liberal policy, the relevance of art education came into question. Thus the assignation of art to limited vocational applications in the early years, eventually led to a decline in support for the broader cause of art education.

The colonizing process specifically discouraged indigenous arts in education. The imagery of Māori art conflicted with the beliefs and values of Christian missionaries and was viewed as the unacceptable worship of graven images. Māori art was labeled as primitive, savage, and tribal, and assigned the status of “objects of ethnological interest” (Chalmers, 1995, p.116 in Smith 2007, p. 82). As a result of the seeming ‘obscenity’ perpetuated by Māori carvings was commonly defaced by cutting off their genitalia. This was not just a physical attack on the value systems of the Māori, but also a spiritual one. In colonized New Zealand, the sole purpose of art education of the Maoris was to assimilate them and make them conform to the more “civilized” order of the British.

### **Jamaica Inheritances**

Jamaica’s national identity is marked by complexity and dynamism, birthing many episodes of contradictions and resilience. There exists the persistent struggle to affirm its identity as well as to decolonize and emancipate itself from the socio-economic, psychological and cultural inheritances of its enslavement. Jamaica endured two major periods of colonization. It was first colonized in 1494 by Spain and later in 1655 by England. The original inhabitants of the island were the Amerindians. Their contact with the Spanish was very traumatic and they were eventually annihilated within seven to eight decades of Spanish rule. They were later replaced by African slaves whose numbers escalated significantly under the British rule in response to the large labor needs of the sugar plantations.

Jamaica was considered a jewel in the English crown due to the prosperity it brought them through trades with other regions. “It is estimated that between 1655 and 1808 more than a million African slaves were brought into the island. Jamaica’s history is therefore one of displacement, genocide, racial oppression and exploitation” (Hill, 2006, p. 22). A significant feature of this colonizing process was also the ‘anti-identity’ factor that involved

the depersonalization of the slaves, stripping them of their essential truths, culture and identity. Sherlock and Bennett (1998) explain:

Throughout slavery, the African remained a chattel, his owner's property; stripped of name and status as a person and severed from his ancestral links. The institution of slavery controlled his worldview, which became so narrow it was like a tunnel with no light at its end" (in Hill, 2006, p. 21)

Nonetheless, and far more powerful than the oppressors' strategies, was the will and determination of the enslaved to overthrow the prevailing colonial empire. As such, slave uprisings, rebellions and the acquired language and knowledge of the colonizers paved the way for Jamaica's independence from British rule in 1962 from British rule. According to Hill (2006), "this sovereignty gave the descendants of freed slaves the political and cultural freedom to call themselves a 'nation,' with a geographical local to call a 'homeland'" (p. 22). This reiterates Tuan's (1977) arguments that place is characterized by "an innate sense of security" (in Manning, 2008, p. 54).

Jamaica's achievement of political independence however, was and continues to be overshadowed by its inability to assume economic independence, making it continuously dependent on external bodies to legitimate its internal and external operations. This leads to new forms of colonization. The process is predictably complex. According to (Sharp, 2009),

...while political...decolonization might have occurred with independence, cultural decolonization – what some call the decolonization of the mind – has been a much more difficult process. Western values, science, history, geography and culture were privileged during colonialism as ways in which the colonizers came to know the places and people they colonized. However, as these knowledges were insinuated through institutions of education, governance and media, they also became (to a greater or lesser extent) the ways in which the colonized came to know themselves. The internalisation of a set of values and ways of knowing the world is much

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more difficult to overturn than the physical rule of colonial regimes, postcolonial theorists would argue (p. 5).

The honing of a strong cultural sense through the arts is a vital variable in this process toward a decolonization of the mind. In concurrence, (Nettleford, 2003) states,

...the natural antidote to the poison of homogenization, which is what cultural globalization threatens, is the retreat to areas of specificity where people feel secure because they control the processes that make them viable - a clear function of the successful quest for cultural identity (p. xvi).

Jamaica continuously retreats to the arts and culture as this forms its best description of its identity. Amidst prevailing racial and political tensions, these are the forces that continue to unite its people and forge rich possibilities for the re-storying of its injured or exploited histories. Nettleford (2003) adds that:

Culture, as a point of power...catapult[s] [Caribbean nations] into the twenty-first century precisely because they are in possession of that new sensibility forged over 500 years of encounters making them fully au fait with relationships, with texture, with contradictions, and with unity in diversity (p. xiv).

This intertextuality facilitates an understanding of regional, national and global events and processes, contributing to what Manning (2008) refers to as a “local/global dialectic” (p. 60). This relationship, he notes, is simultaneously sensitive to “broader ecological and social relationships [whilst] it deepens people’s sense of community and place” (p. 60). Many artists in Jamaica have used the medium of the visual arts successfully to assist the cultural recovery process. However, the visual arts curriculum at the lower secondary level in Jamaican schools has been slow to follow contemporary developments within the arts as indicated in the introductory chapter.

### **Globalization**

Globalization seldom escapes modern awareness due to the many drastic changes experienced in economic, political, and cultural arenas. (Stromquist & Monkman, 2000) advise that it may be applied broadly to “debates centering on convergence/divergence, homogenization/ heterogenization and local/global issues” (p. 3). Invariably, then, it influences our conceptions of place as well as the ways that we experience them. The way education is defined, the population it serves and the means by which it is assessed are also implicated in this phenomenon.

### **Globalization as a means of concealing and revealing place**

Globalization according to Gibson-Graham (1996), refers to

a set of processes by which the world is rapidly being integrated into one economic space via increased international trade, the internationalization of production and capital markets, the internationalization of a commodity culture promoted by an increasingly networked global telecommunications system (cited in Stromquist and Monkman 2000, p. 4)

As a phenomenon, globalization affects not only trade amongst the world’s peoples but contributes many drastic changes with cultural and political implications for how the world adapts to its processes. The global culture that has emerged has blurred the geographical boundaries that formerly affected the feasibility of unitary work on a planetary scale. While this has been lauded by many for opening up opportunities where they formerly were unthinkable or inaccessible, today many remain skeptical of the underlying processes that are at play and arguably, necessary, for globalized society to work efficiently (Smith & Sobel, 2010; Stromquist & Monkman, 2000; Wattchow & Brown, 2011).

Skepticism endures to the extent that in our increasingly globalized world, social, environmental and cultural degradation is rife despite the ‘unconditional good’ that economic

globalization promises. Emphasis on economic trade has often translated to inequitable conditions where communities and regions subordinate themselves to the dominant economic models and the tradeoff amounts to the destabilization of local identities and places. This situation is further exacerbated by increased emphasis on unsustainable patterns of consumption that threaten the ecological health of places and the weakening of community relationships in favour of models that emphasize individual and ultimately, capitalist achievement.

Cassanova's (1996) skepticism is founded on a similar premise; he views globalization as rhetoric for camouflaging its economic dependency agenda that has been imposed on many developing countries and ultimately lies at the heart of the many social problems they now experience. One of the major ramifications of this economic agenda has been the increased commodification of education by means of standardized outputs that ignore the particularities of the contexts within which it occurs.

Consequently, contemporary education implicitly and explicitly contributes to what Graham (2007) calls "a widespread commitment to prepare students in an economy that is often individualistic, unsustainable and inequitable" (p. 376). This in turn creates a ripple effect that was lamented and forewarned by Wendell Berry as contributing to the dissolution of places (Ball & Lai, 2006). Like Berry, many today have sought to advocate for the reclamation of the local and to further the posture of bioregionalists who maintain that "human cultures and economies should be grounded in the characteristics of particular places and communities" (Smith & Sobel, 2010, p. 22). The overarching movement associated with this philosophical position is referred to as the new localism; it seeks to counter patterns that are anti-community life. According to Gruenewald and Smith (2008), "The new localism recognizes that economic globalization under corporate capitalism is, potentially economically devastating, culturally homogenizing, and ecologically destructive" (p. xiv).

A subset of the new localism is place-based or place-conscious education (the terms will be used interchangeably throughout this chapter). The educational arena is an important avenue for addressing the concerns of the new localism, as this is where critical thinking may evolve to prepare students to participate as ‘place-makers’ in the larger world. The interests of these place-conscious advocates are well founded as Geertz (1996) reminds us that “no one lives in the world in general,” and thus all our activities and experiences are emplaced (in Gruenewald & Smith 2008, p. 137). This is a reality well known and understood by many who hold affection for the places from which they have come. These places often hold and authenticate our human identity (Gruenewald, 2005).

### **Identity and Globalization**

Identity is never clear-cut, and neither is it fixed. Whilst it implicates our histories, it also entangles the social, cultural and economic relations that frame our lives. As such, it is more a state of becoming, and often a state of responding, that creates new re-writes on the former drafts of ourselves that we have come to accept. Accordingly, “our struggles for identity and a sense of personal coherence and intelligibility are centered on this threshold between interior and exterior, between self and other” (Rutherford, 1990, p. 24).

Likewise, globalization is a process of paradoxes. On the one hand, it increases interaction through its increase in technologies and “conversely the diminution of spiritual and cultural values” (Stromquist & Monkman, 2000, p. 11). This translates to a promotion of ideas that support the global market and consequently a challenge to those that weaken connections to it. It also contributes to a string of repercussions for formal schooling where efficiency and productivity criteria are imposed that shift the focus from child-centered to economy-centered and thus causes education to lose ground as a public good in favour of a producer of another marketable commodity (Stromquist & Monkman, 2000).



## **Critical Pedagogy of Place as Re-Marks on Places**

### **Place-based Education**

Place-based education, according to Sobel (2004, p iii), “challenges the meaning of education by asking seemingly simple questions: Where am I? What is the nature of this place? What sustains this community?” He also posits that it,

employs a process of re-storying, whereby students are asked to respond creatively to stories of their homeground so that, in time, they are able to position themselves, imaginatively and actually, within the continuum of nature and culture in that place. They become part of the community, rather than a passive observer of it (ibid).

Despite its recent emergence in scholarship of pedagogy and curriculum, place-conscious education is not new; it is just newly coloured (Gruenewald, 2003a, 2003b; Inwood, 2008; Smith & Sobel, 2010). All education prior to the development of the common school in the 1800s was place-conscious, meaning, “local culture and local needs provided the context for, and the relationship between, learning and living in a particular geographical region” (Gruenewald 2005, p. 263).

Moreover, its tradition has inheritances in the call of ecologized humanists to re-think and reform education to “better serve the social and ecological well-being of particular places” (Ball & Lai, 2006, p. 262). Place-conscious education’s attention to experience also “locates its pedagogy in the broader traditions of experiential and contextual education and in the philosophical tradition of phenomenology” (Gruenewald & Smith, 2008, p. 143).

Common to the existing scholarship regarding place and sense of place is “concern for the cumulative effects of modernity upon our ability to respect and care for the local places we call home and the remote places we encounter when we travel” (Wattchow & Brown, 2011, p. 51). The scholarship identifies the hyper-mobility and shifting paradigms of

the times as having direct bearing on the placelessness which many individuals experience today. Place advocates are quick to point out that this ethic of care is not based in mere nostalgia for ‘the good old days,’ but rather based on a desire to respond realistically to the current and ubiquitous social and ecological challenges communities face globally so that the well-being of places may be sustained for future generations.

Place-based education has the advantage of being multi-disciplinary in nature. As such, it is easily adaptable to a variety of subject disciplines and contexts and is able to ground these experiences, making them relevant for learners and teachers alike. This contributes the added value of capitalizing on the profound pedagogical possibilities that informal experiences enact while diversifying the experience for learners. Penetito (2004) describes this advantage as a means of “investigat[ing] areas that are often ignored and [as] rais[ing] questions that are often left unanswered because the tradition in research is to concentrate on what works for the mainstream and then consider how non-mainstream groups relate to the mainstream” (p. 3).

However, given the preoccupation with the discourse of accountability, place-based education continues to be seen as falling short of the requirements for participation in the global economy, as it does not easily yield quantifiable or statistically comparable results. Interestingly, this same lack has been identified by Gruenewald (2005) as an advantage for developing a case for place-conscious education. He posits, “place-based education has not been widely institutionalized and potentially appeals to a broader range of participants in communities and schools” (p. 263). Thus, even in a primarily negative environment, the overriding fact that so many personally hold place affiliations has seen ‘place’ gaining traction across a wide variety of disciplines.

Gruenewald (2005) goes further to clarify that whilst demonstrable accountability is inherently a good way of validating a program’s effectiveness, it is the codification emphasis

of current practice that makes it problematic. Ultimately it leads to normalization and a system that encourages social control and punishes non-compliance with this control. He suggests as an alternative, the development of “complementary and counter-statements of measurable purposes, objectives and goals that express the actual aims of place-conscious educators and citizens” (p. 274).

These alternatives should necessarily attend to the social and ecological dimensions of the places where people live. Gruenewald (2005) backs his argument with models where place-based education enacts these alternatives, such as, the *Rural School and Community Trust*, the *Alaska Native Knowledge Network* and the *American Educational Research Association’s Social Justice, Peace and Environmental Education Standards Project*. These, he says are initiatives that “seek to interrupt and transform the culture of accountability” and demonstrate strategies that ensure “that the life of places, and the human and non-human communities that inhabit them, becomes a central feature of education” (p. 280).

### ***Critical Pedagogy of Place as a Re-Mark on Place-Based Education and Critical Pedagogies***

Place-based education, despite the important foundations it has laid for reclamation of the local in the global age, has been criticized as being too simplistic or undertheorized. Its supposed estrangement from sociocultural difference and politics has been identified by as contributing to its simplicity and lack of criticality (Gruenewald 2003a; Inwood 2008). To address this gap scholars have sought to problematize its focus. Smith & Sobel (2010) suggest that it be viewed as a “starting point rather than an ending point” [to] “reduce the chance that focusing [solely] on the local will encourage parochialism and the disregard for the national or global (p. 23). Gruenewald (2003a), in acknowledgement of this shortcoming of the field, proposed a solution for enlarging its socio-ecological dimension by adding a third political dimension in the form of critical pedagogy.

### **Critical Pedagogy**

Critical pedagogy developed out of Paulo Freire's (1996) ideas and Neo-marxist (Frankfurt School) Critical Theory, as challenges to assumptions, practices and outcomes prevalent in dominant culture. It informs reflection and action about the interrelationship of knowledge, power and identity and raises pertinent questions regarding the way knowledge is selected for curricula and for whom it is selected. In today's globalized environment, these questions are particularly useful in understanding how we as individuals we fit into this 'global village' and set in motion the critical thinking required to negotiate its shifting paradigms.

For instance, Casey (1997) posits, "to be at all—to exist in any way—is to be somewhere, and to be somewhere is to be in some kind of place...Nothing we do is unplaced (in Gruenewald, 2003b, p. 622). This emphasizes Gruenewald's recognition of the political dimension of place. He notes, "as long as there have been cultures, cultures and their related politics have been entwined with places" (Gruenewald & Smith, 2008, p. 142). Hence, places are not neutral to political matters because they are in part social constructions. For this reason, place-based education is appropriately combined with critical pedagogy to broaden its discourse. Notwithstanding critical pedagogy's importance as a social justice discourse in challenging the power fields of today's globalized world, it also has also been identified as having ecologized shortcomings.

Furman and Gruenewald (2004) posit:

...from an ecological perspective, most discourses on social justice are incomplete because they are concerned exclusively with human beings and fail to acknowledge the interdependence of social and ecological systems. This anthropocentric orientation further reinforces assumptions about the legitimacy of existing cultural patterns (e.g., economic expansion and hyperconsumerism) and lacks the conceptual vision to acknowledge

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ecological problems or to see the social justice problems humans create for themselves when they damage their nonhuman environments (pp. 52-53).

Consequently, the remediation of the shortcomings of the two discourses, place-based education and critical pedagogy, can be found in the other. Hence, Gruenewald (2003a) proposes that the fields be merged to create a critical pedagogy of place as a means of acknowledging their interdependency and embedding them in a more productive framework.

### **Critical Pedagogy of Place**

Critical Pedagogy of Place is the resulting discourse from the nexus of social, ecological and pedagogical concerns. The discourse, developed by David Gruenewald, inherits from the convergence of educational traditions in place-based education and critical pedagogy. He identified these two traditions as being compatible and capable (when twinned), of presenting a broader and more relevant framework for educational theory, research, policy and practice. He argues:

Being in a situation has a spatial, geographical, contextual dimension. Reflecting on one's situation often corresponds to changing one's relationship to a place...this spatial dimension of situationality, and its attention to social transformation... connects critical pedagogy with a pedagogy of place (Gruenewald, 2003a, p. 4).

Critical pedagogy of place's core concern rests in the processes of decolonization and reinhabitation. Decolonization is associated with social justice theories and places culturally responsive teaching as its agenda in an attempt to challenge and undo the multiple forms of oppression that prevail in the schooling system. Reinhabitation on the other hand, is associated with ecological justice and is concerned with learning to live well in a place by preventing harm to its human and nonhuman constituents, thereby contributing to its future sustainability.

Gruenewald (2003a) asserts that it is impossible for human beings to learn to occupy places well without embracing these two concerns. Further, their twinned agenda translates to a set of questions that can be asked of learners in any place on earth. He asks: “What is happening here? What should happen here? What needs to be transformed, conserved, restored, or created in this place?” (Gruenewald & Smith, 2008, p. 149).

These questions reveal the multicultural and global impact of this ‘local’ discourse, rendering it a powerful pedagogical strategy. Inasmuch as critical pedagogy of place is multicultural, it is also multi-dimensional and therefore multidisciplinary as all experiences are grounded in place. Gruenewald (2003b) attributes five dimensions to place; they are perceptual, sociological, ideological, political and ecological. One discipline within which it has found increasing popularity is visual arts education.

### **Reconceptualizations of Critical Place-based Pedagogies through the Arts**

Developments within place-based discourse along with Gruenewald’s (2003a) call for critical perspectives on place-based education have incited several calls for grounding place-based pedagogies in the arts and humanities. Existing literature that promote place as a guiding construct for art education claims that this approach broadens the parameters of both fields. Blandy and Hoffman (1993) speak of this synthesis as promoting “an understanding of the interdependence and interconnectedness of all things” (p. 28).

In concurrence, Blandy, Congdon, and Krug (1998) see it as engendering “creativity...in healthy participatory communities” (p. 241). This leads to “[the legitimization of] locally practiced creative expression...as worthy of academic study...” (Ball & Lai, 2006, p. 279) as well as “restorative possibilities of artmaking...” (Graham, 2007, p. 379).

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Consequently, “ecological literacy” (Inwood, 2008) and “... alternative representations of place [become] possible” (Somerville, 2010).

The arts in these contexts have been privileged as an appropriate vehicle for promoting place for their affective, inter-disciplinary and multi-dimensional possibilities. Inwood (2008) posits,

Integrating place-based education with art education promises an innovative approach to ecological and environmental education, one that balances the traditional roots of these disciplines (found in the cognitive, positivist approaches of science education) with the more creative, affective, and sensory approaches of art education. In this art education offers a dynamic way to increase the power and relevancy of learning about the environment by providing an alternative means of furthering learners’ ecological literacy (p. 30).

Place, as center of experience, provides a productive framework for arts education because it serves as a lens through which we view how the world works and how our lives, identities and possibilities are shaped by the places we occupy (Grunewald 2003b). Framing visual arts education in place also offers possibilities for building on works of contemporary visual artists, who endeavor to make sense of everyday experiences. Walker (2001) states that, “art students’ lives as well as their studio experiences, will be enriched when informed by an understanding of artmaking as meaning making” (p. v). This stance supports the role of artmaking in building capacity to make informed choices more broadly. When students understand that they share in a collective experience that has been invested with global significance, it legitimates the artmaking process, and fosters evolving understandings and the making of art that reflects deep-seated issues.

### **Sense of Place as Agency for Places**

Sense of place is akin to the Māori concept of *turangawaewae*, which means home ground; a place to stand. Some scholars contend that a “sense of place” is difficult to define due to its intangibility (Relph, 1976; Stedman, 2003). What is generally agreed upon however is that a sense of place denotes the quality of the relationship that people share with places. That quality of relationship, some argue, is usually grounded in a personal and intimate connection with place developed over years of residing in a specific locale, and thereby holds a deep sense of belonging. According to Hay (1988), it:

... [Gives] one a locus, a place from which to feel the Earth and be connected to it. Through years of residence, a sense of place provides a centre of continuity. From a strong center where one feels at home as an insider and a member of a community, a person can face the unknowns of the larger world beyond... (p. 163).

Whatever the definition employed, it is generally accepted that places affect human behaviour and well-being and, as such, they contribute greatly to the development of individual and group identity. They create an impression that encompasses “the general ways in which people feel about places, sense it and assign concepts and values to it” (Najafi & Shariff, 2011, p. 187). So any understanding of a sense of place must take into account the characteristics of the setting and what the individual brings to it and takes away from it. The powerful position of place in human life notwithstanding, notions of place are increasingly becoming troubled or problematised by the effects of globalization and technological advancements that blur geographical boundaries and compress time and space.

Relph (1976) argues that such effects contribute to settings devoid of any distinct personality or character, and thereby promote a sense of “placelessness” (p. 6). Consequently, notions of a ‘sense of place’ become complicated also, particularly in cases where students



are from migrant families, or where there is the pressure to adjust traditional ways of being in order to participate more fully in the global village that the world has become today.

Some scholars attempt to demystify the complexities associated with a sense of place by breaking it down into levels (Relph, 1976; Shamai & Ilatov, 2005). They explain that there are different degrees to which a sense of place may be achieved, ranging from the superficial to the intimate. There is agreement amongst them that at the base level there is a communal but not necessarily personal attachment to place, and that the ties established tend to be based on activities. However, Relph (1976) associates the most intimate level with existential insideness, to the extent that place is equivalent to a point of orientation. In Chapters four and Five, the degrees to which the participants achieved a sense of place are addressed.

The conceptual framework of this study (Fig. 5) aims to address the main research question: How can visual arts teachers use artmaking to help students to recognize, critically analyze and interpret their senses of self, place and community? It draws upon and weaves together the pedagogical practices, concepts and theories discussed above. The framework is discussed more fully in Chapter Six.

Part Three: Conceptual Framework

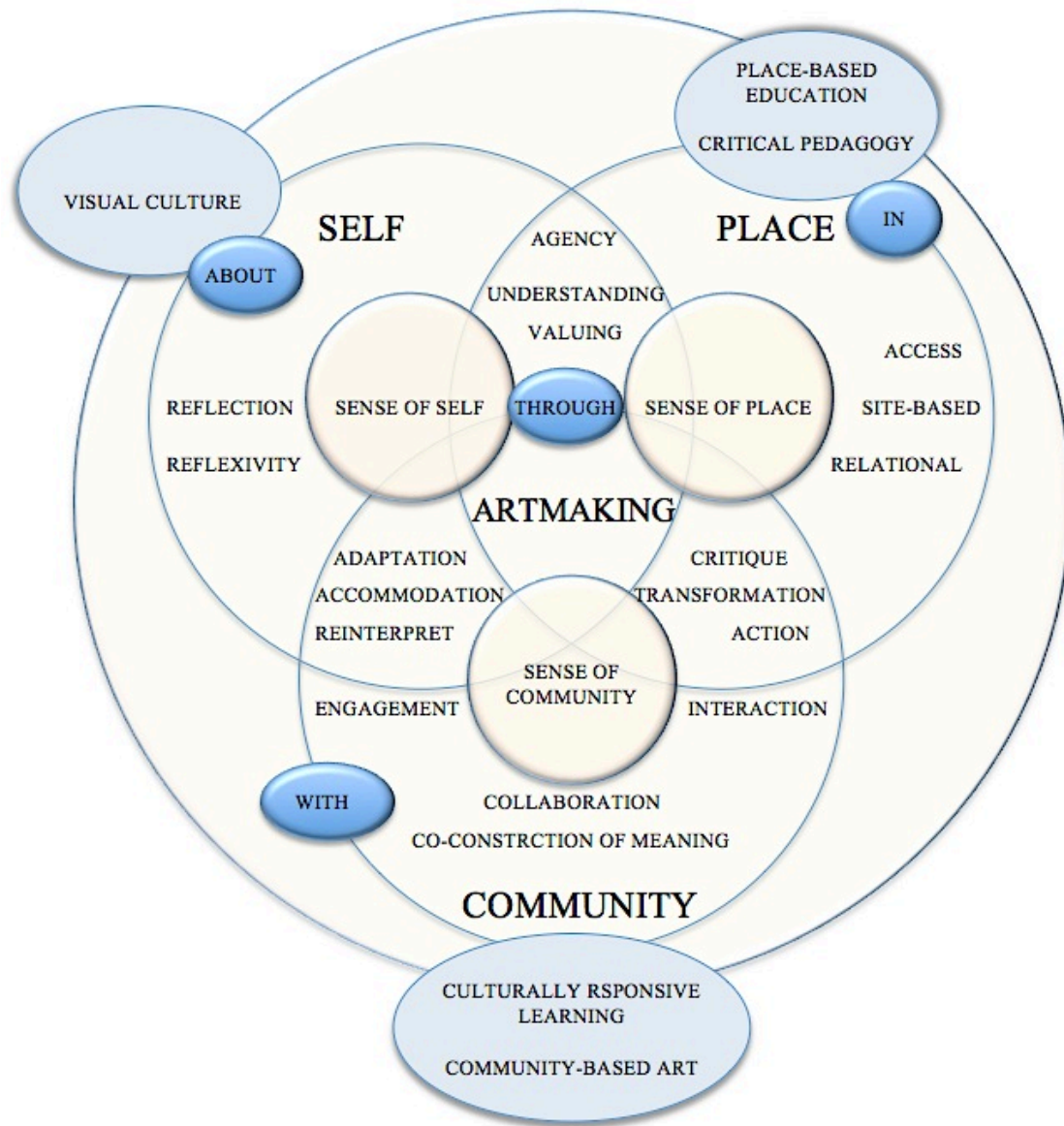


Figure 5 Conceptual Framework

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## **SECTION TWO: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

## Chapter Four

### Re-Marking a Secondary School in Christchurch

*We are interested in openings... – Maxine Greene (2001)*

Belief upon belief,  
Every paintbrush stained,  
And every can empty,  
Leaves another prayer.

Closed eyes, clasped hands  
With every colour  
Streaming down the glass  
He smiles.

-- Group 1 (Students, Christchurch  
Case Study, 2012)

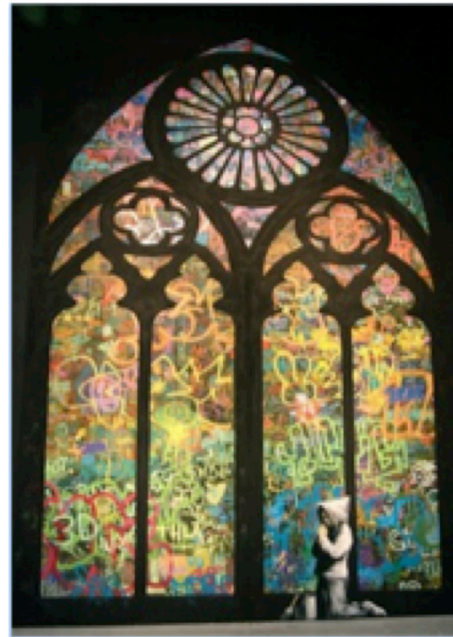


Figure 6 Stained Glass Window, 2011,  
Banksy

### Introduction

Carpenter (2003) suggests, “The real [art] classroom... exists when the classroom environment is viewed as a complex text” within which other texts are embedded or through which these myriad texts interact (p. 15). The metaphor of the hypertext is aptly illustrated by the discrete artforms juxtaposed above to tease out the relational nature of the artmaking process undertaken in this study and the ways that the participants in it came to ‘know’ aesthetically (Bourriaud, 2002). It brings into sharp focus the ways that sights (the seeable), sites (the feelable) and cites (the sayable) have “co-appearance” in this research and provide a

locus from which the year 9 students negotiated their senses of self, place and community (Springgay et al., 2008).

These mostly 13-14 year old students collaboratively wrote the poem above in response to an invitation to describe and interpret, *Stained Glass Cathedral Window* by Banksy (2011) in Fig. 6 above and the context was an introduction to *Contemporary Art*. Since “the arts are inherently about an aesthetic sensibility or an embodied awareness of the world”, the exercise helped students to understand that the arts provide other ways of knowing, beyond the acquisition and expression of skills (Irwin, 2004, p. 44). It also served to demonstrate that artworks have a life of their own in spite of their creators’ intentions and that drawing on our personal experiences helps us to make sense of them and extend their ‘lives’.

As was true of the students’ ambitions to facilitate a reading of the artwork above through their poetry, this chapter offers relational readings of the research encounter. It weaves the aesthetic with the empirical, reflection and reflexivity to report the results of an arts-based case study undertaken with a group of year 9 visual arts students at a secondary school in Christchurch, New Zealand. It delineates the artmaking processes that guided this endeavor from an a/r/tographic frame and illuminates the ways that my artist, researcher and teacher roles are implicated throughout the study.

The chapter is comprised of two parts: Part One describes the research context and the class activities. It draws upon three lenses to capture the complexities and dynamics that manifested in these contexts. These include: a) an unpacking of the meanings in the student’s individual works; b) following the development of select students (whose expressions were more explicit), to track the threads that were recurrent in their artworks; and c) examining the ways that the class as a whole responded to the art exercises.

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These inform the conceptual framework that clarifies the themes that emerge and further contributes to the within-case analysis that follows in Part Two. The analysis contributes a set of wonderings about the possible implications that the findings might have for strengthening art teaching and learning in schools.

The structure of this chapter closely resembles the nature of the facilitated artmaking processes it describes. In an effort to perform this potential, the a/r/tographic reading it invites is through a juxtaposition of art and text. Accordingly, in addition to students' works, my visual notes recur throughout the parts and are indicative of the reflexive stance I bring to the encounter. These consist of imagery extracted from my visual journal, which I have created or adapted. They are accompanied by descriptions that aim to supplement their meanings. The first of these follows.

### Opening the Case

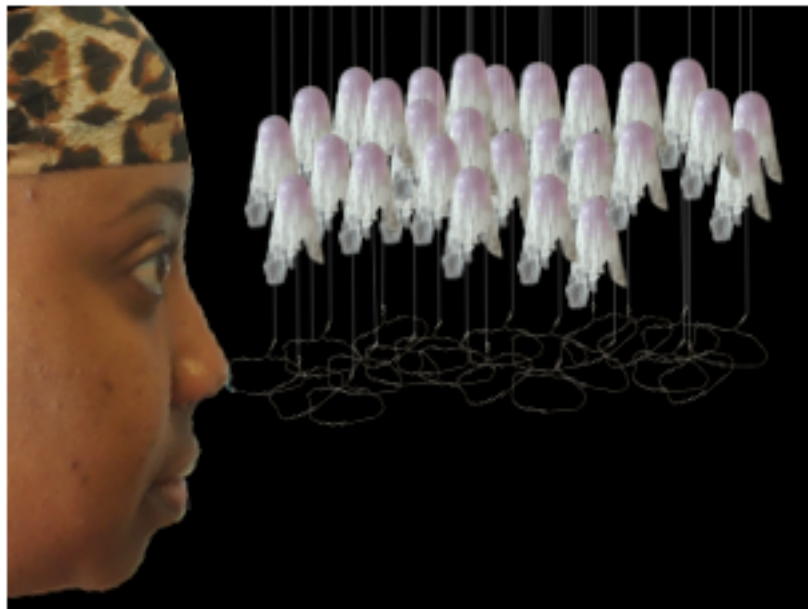


Figure 7 Framing the Case (Excerpt from Researcher's Visual Journal)

“Openings”, as described by Greene (2001) refer to new ways of sensing that escape predictability and engender “a special kind of reflectiveness and expressiveness, a reaching

out for meaning, a learning to learn” (p. 7). Fig. 7 above frames my interest in the openings that this case has to offer.

In negotiating entry into the study, the Head of Department (HOD) used the metaphor of a bubble to describe the way she saw the art department as an escape from the realities of everyday life (personal communication, 2012). The metaphor stuck with me since and I became interested in exploring how this bubble might be negotiated to facilitate meaningful dialogue between the worlds of the art department and the students’ life worlds.

Pictured is an image of myself to the left looking out toward 28 veiled bubbles suspended by strings that are supposedly anchored by loops (see Fig. 7). The bubbles represent each student and are characteristic of their multifaceted selves. Their veiled forms suggest that only through interaction can this multidimensionality be made manifest.

The loops are however too fragile to offer a sense of permanence and are therefore susceptible to shifting as the bubbles interact. They serve as a reminder that the participants’ histories, cultures and ways of being help to shape the experience as they shape my own experiences, as metaphorically represented by the fabric on my head. My looking out is one of curiosity.

It is both an attempt to look past their surface appearances and ‘impenetrable’ appearances to discover what lies beneath each veil in order to foster a learning environment that validates what they bring to the encounter and to encourage the co-construction of meanings.

### **Description of the Case**

The research site, Riverside High (a pseudonym), as previously described in Chapter Two, is marked by a rich history, actually and metaphorically represented by a clump of cabbage trees. The site maps a number of journeys. The first relates to the generations of

local Māori—prior to European settlement—who used a strand of Ti Kouka (cabbage), still located on that school site, to help them navigate their way through the then treacherous swampland, to get to the Ngāi Tahu<sup>10</sup> pā<sup>11</sup> of Kaipoi. History reveals that the trees provided a resting place for the travellers and that a tapu<sup>12</sup> character was attached to the site by virtue of the sacred rites that were performed over the travellers there to guarantee safe journeys for them.

The second journey represents a re-storying of the area by early European settlers who also used the same trees to fix their positions as they journeyed westward in the 1850s. The third has to do with the way the trees today have been incorporated into the culture of the school metaphorically to encourage students to navigate their educational journeys skillfully. This case study adds yet another re-mark to the laden history of the site. In this instance, the cabbage trees acquire the metaphorical renderings of self, place and community. Since these provide students with a locus from which the world might be negotiated, this study sees them as important facets of the human experience that require exploration.

Accordingly, the study describes a journey the students and I took—one where the artmaking process was the compass that students used to help them to render their senses of self, place and community visible. It seeks to tease out the complexities that were at the heart of the endeavour by elucidating the aesthetic understandings that emerged.

### **Description of the Participants**

The poem below was created from descriptions that the students gave of themselves. Whilst it does not feature the entire group due to the word limitations of this thesis, it does

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<sup>10</sup> Ngāi Tahu is a Māori iwi (tribe) which occupies the largest tribal territory of the South Island of New Zealand.

<sup>11</sup> A pā is a traditional Māori fortified village. They were the common form of habitation for the Māori well into the 1800s. They were often located alongside traditional villages or were the village itself.

<sup>12</sup> Tapu refers to an ancient Māori spiritual and social code that is about sanctity and respect for people, natural resources and the environment.



## Re-MARKING PLACES

however manage to convey the complex identities of the group. More contextual information of the participants has been provided in Chapter Three.

I came from Afghanistan.

I came to New Zealand.

I am 13 and I am the eldest child.

I go to Riverside High school and I am in year 9.

I am...but I don't know who I am.

I am open-minded.

That, I am!

I was born in New Zealand but my parents are Korean.

I like sport: baseball, soccer, rugby and basketball too.

I am the symphony of here and there.

I was born in Iran. I came to New Zealand.

I am the youngest in my family.

I may seem quiet but when I'm with my friends

That's when I really am

I make jokes but at the right time

I don't like sports but I do go outside.

I like to go to the movies with friends.

But sometimes I just laze around.

I was born in Timaru.

I like it because it is small but nothing exciting happens there

I am! ~~And I'm part chinese~~<sup>13</sup>;

I'm half Scottish but I was born in Christchurch

I like sports, travelling and nature

~~I...so hate having my picture taken!!!~~

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<sup>13</sup> The strikethrough reflects the original writing of the student and is indicative of information that she crossed out or chose to withhold.

## Re-MARKING PLACES

I am 14

I was born in Sydney, Australia.

That's who I am!

I am 13 and quite short.

I am Chinese and my hobby is listening to music.

I am shy but I am also serious.

I like movies: horror, comedy and drama are my favourite

I like science, geography and biology

Culture, fashion and travelling too

But I also like old cartoons, doodling and writing poems or songs,

And yeah... counting money too!

$\frac{1}{4}$  Rarotongan,

$\frac{1}{8}$  French,

The rest is English!

That's what I am!

I am creative and smart.

Humorous, happy and funny, that's me!

I go to Riverside High School and I'm in art class right now.

The answers surpass biology and geography,

They lie in the maths; they depend on my cultural locations.

Who I am is therefore the emergence of these complications.

I found the descriptions interesting on a number of levels: based on what the students chose to share; what they chose not to share and the information they initially shared but later retracted. To explore their personhood more fully I will draw upon a series of artmaking exercises in which they participated, which centered on their personal interests, their philosophies, how they see themselves and how they define and interpret community.

Each of the exercises was designed to both address the main research question that drives this study and the four interrelated strands set out in the *Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2000) as follows (see Appendix 1 for further details):

- Developing Practical Knowledge in the Visual Arts
- Developing Ideas in the Visual Arts
- Communicating and Interpreting in the Visual Arts
- Understanding the Visual Arts in Context

### **Project I: Papercuts as Bridges between the Personal Interests and the Curriculum**

The written portraits above, though concise, paint a vivid picture of the cultural diversity that existed amongst the student participants at the Christchurch site, albeit the majority of them being of New Zealand European or Pākehā<sup>14</sup> origin (as indicated in Chapter Two). In accordance, our first artmaking exercise was designed to familiarize me with their personal, social and cultural interests.

The students were asked to identify an issue or idea that was meaningful to them and to communicate this interest through the medium of papercuts. The exercise was deliberately open-ended in structure to accommodate their interests, thus creating an atmosphere that validated their contributions. It also served as a creative strategy to help me become more familiar with them. In order for the students to feel confident enough to take the leap into examining their own experiences, scaffolding was required. Gude (2000), like others in the field, recommends contextualizing curriculum in order to embed it with meaning.

Accordingly, the lesson began with a brief history of papercut. The medium was defined simply as the art of cutting paper designs. Its origin was traced back to China where paper was also invented and it was noted that the artform was especially popular during Chinese holiday festivals. Students were also informed that the art spread to the rest of the

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<sup>14</sup> Pākehā is a term commonly used in New Zealand to describe New Zealanders of European origin.

## Re-MARKING PLACES

world during the 14<sup>th</sup> century where it was infused with other cultural styles. Examples of varied types of papercut were shown to demonstrate the transitions.

To link its use to contemporary art practices, we looked at the way its form has been appropriated by Kara Walker, who uses cut-paper figures in the form of near life –sized silhouettes to explore important issues such as race, gender and sexuality. Attention was drawn to the way that the medium in this context was transformed from being merely decorative to being evocative and provocative. For instance, the silhouette represents avoidance since the viewer cannot look at it directly; as such it carries metaphorical resonance for the subject matters she explores.

Below is one of Walker's (2002) works (Fig. 8), which was chosen as the inspiration for the lesson because of the coloured projections that she added to it. It both creates interest and implicates the viewer into the work by virtue of the shadows cast onto the wall when he or she steps into the lit environment.



Figure 8 Insurrection! (Kara Walker, 2002)

## Re-MARKING PLACES

Having laid the foundations, I used visual aids to demonstrate the process of creating a paper cut. The students were then supplied with A4 paper and pencils to brainstorm the ideas they wanted to communicate and to identify symbols that would serve these purposes. Given the time restraints, they were encouraged to let their ideas brew overnight and to come prepared to work on them the following day.

In reflecting on the process that day, the HOD expressed satisfaction with the way that the lesson progressed but cautioned that conceptual thinking was relatively new at this level, and so it might pose a challenge for many of the students. She also suggested that I engage in a more hands on demonstration of the papercut process for those who might require further clarification. I appreciated her feedback and considered how I could simultaneously mimic what I asked them to do whilst I demonstrated the process.

The London Olympics was going on at the time and provided an authentic reference to which the students could relate. Likewise, being away from home (Jamaica) and watching the victories of my countrymen and countrywomen sharpened my own sense of self, place and community, so I resolved to focus on an aspect of the games to demonstrate the papercut process. Usain Bolt, with his record titles in the sprinting events, generated genuine interest in Jamaica amongst the class members and so I decided that an image of him (see Fig. 9) would provide a strong representation of personal and national pride.



Figure 9 Personal Papercut of Usain Bolt Doing His Signature Pose (2012)

As anticipated, the next day when the work was introduced, the students were familiar with Usain and his notoriety in the Olympics. I had drawn him doing his signature pose with a track in the background onto black cartridge paper. I carefully cut out sections of the drawing to ensure that the important parts of the image were retained and placed white A3 paper behind it to emphasize the cut out areas. I also included the colours of the Jamaican flag to highlight significant features of the work. As a means of further reinforcing the process, groups of students were asked to create a drawing, and I demonstrated how to cut out the individual parts of the image in order to keep the composition intact.

The students gained a better grasp of the assignment through the demonstrations and showed incremental shifts in their confidence levels thereafter. However, the process was not a linear one. It accommodated constant shifts inter-sites (students' life worlds and the art class), intra-sites (previous and present classroom approaches to artmaking) and between sites and sights (students' experiences and ways of visualizing them). These signaled creative tensions between surrender and autonomy.

For me as teacher, the nature of these shifts elicited these reflective questions:

- a) Does the exercise provide a strong enough platform on which students might build their ideas?

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- b) In what ways are the prescriptions for the project empowering or potentially disempowering for the students?
- c) How do I facilitate the shift in students' consciousness so that they own the artmaking process?

For the students, the following questions were heard indicating the creative tensions they were experiencing as these shifts occurred:

- a) This is what I am interested in...do you think it is a good idea?
- b) Could you give me an idea of what to draw?

The students' concerns suggested that whilst they had previously learned to draw relevant connections between the works of contemporary artists and their art, using art to investigate their own ideas was new to them. James, one of the students, offered a positive response to this new creative opportunity: "I like how you get to design what you want to design instead of being told what to do".

To address their concerns, I scaffolded the process by encouraging them to write down what they wanted to communicate and to think about symbols that metaphorically represented their ideas. They then produced two to three thumbnail sketches and eventually selected the one that best communicated their ideas. As facilitator, I guided them individually and encouraged them to take charge of communicating their own stories as only they could do this authentically.

For a better understanding of the outcomes, the works produced by the students have been included below (see Fig. 10). These were supplemented with reflection sheets (see Appendix 13) that aided their metacognition and helped them to make personal and/or social connections to contemporary issues. The sheet also served to guide their evaluations of their creations. In the cases where they were not satisfied with their outputs, I met with them

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individually and offered suggestions of ways that the formal aspects of the work could be better resolved. They then reserved some time in the next session or outside of class hours to work on these independently.

When examined as a whole, common themes were evidenced across the artworks and the interpretations that the students applied to them. The following themes emerged: environmental stewardship, relationships, conflict, social justice, identity and media influences. The artworks below are presented according to these themes. Each work has a corresponding number to the bottom right of it for the purpose of helping the reader to make connections between my discussions and the particular artworks referenced.



*Environmental Stewardship*



Figure 10 Environmental Stewardship

There were several common threads that ran through the artworks produced by the students; one such thread was an understanding of the responsibility we have to care for the environment. Of the twenty-eight papercuts, twelve had overt references to nature; some were described in detail, others less so. When the students spoke about the ideas that they were interested in communicating, a number of them expressed a strong sense of stewardship

for the environment. “Nature is detailed and fragile and we need to look after it,” said Lexy (4).

Put in a slightly different way, Tash (5) said, “Nature is beautiful the way it is and you should leave it that way.” A perceived threat to the sustainability of the environment through the insensitive actions of human beings was demonstrated through Kan’s (1), focus on what he termed, the “urbanisation of forests.” His simple but direct remedy was for us to “Keep forests just forests.”

Echoing these sentiments but in relation to animals, Henry (2) stated, “all things have the right to live, even sheep and cows.” In a similar vein Mac (3) conveyed his disgust for unnatural practices of rearing animals. He agonised over the fact that all chickens are not allowed to roam freely and stated explicitly, “I don’t like non free-range chickens”. His campaign was, “No caged chickens.” Whilst the other students (whose works are featured above) were less expressive regarding their choices, Hana (10) shared that nature was a metaphor for hope and peace for her.

There is raft of strong legislation in New Zealand concerning the environment, and one might assume that the stance taken by some of the students is a reflection of the concerns of their families and the communities with which they are affiliated.

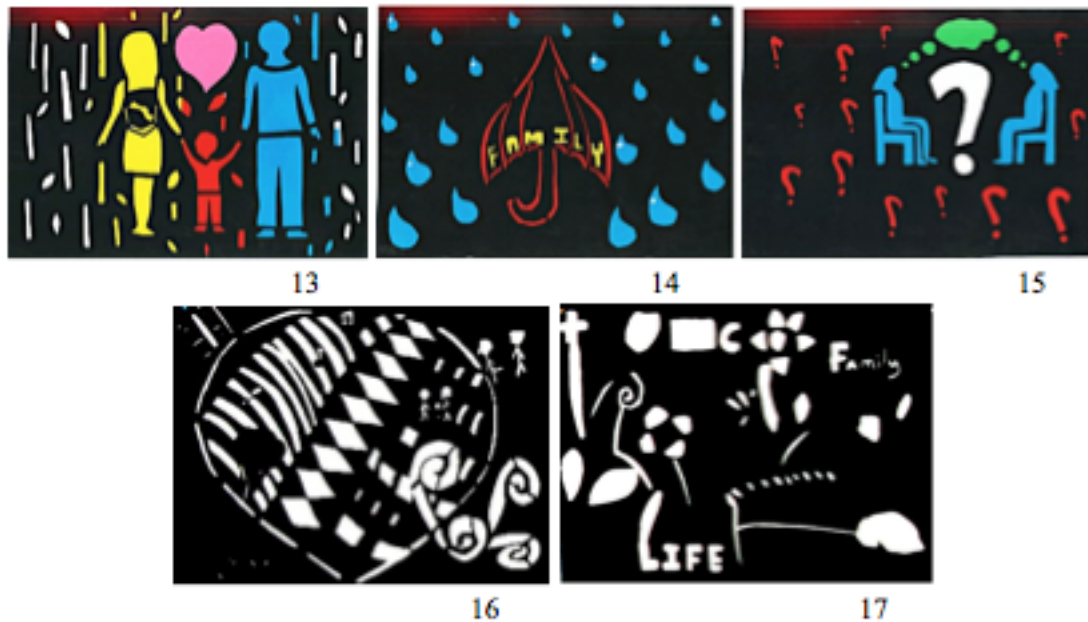
*Relationships*

Figure 11 Relationships

Relationships were another thread that featured in the students' works. Relationships are a universal concept. Good or bad, natural or imposed, they significantly affect our conceptions of the world and the ways in which we lead our lives. For adolescents this is a particularly important frame through which they secure an understanding of themselves. The descriptions that follow offer some insight into the way the participants described this frame.

Visually, direct references are made to family in the works of Nana (13), Meg (14), and Lisa (17). Nana made these references pictorially, whilst the latter two included the word family in their compositions. Nana said she was interested in expressing “the love of a family and their closeness” as well as “how a family loves all the members and nothing could bring it down.”

And whilst Meg refrained from commenting on the work, her imagery strongly infers similar sentiments since the family takes the form of an umbrella, which one presumes keeps the members safe from the storms of life. Lisa also refrained from commenting on her

## Re-MARKING PLACES

artwork, but the elements of nature featured in addition to the words, “life” and “family” might be interpreted as stating that these are the constituents that count in life. Note how life is written in capital letters.

Sasha (16) integrated elements of relationship into her design through what appears to be couples, musical notes, koru designs and patterns in general. There are four references to the *koru*. Koru refers to the spiral shape that imitates an unfurling green fern frond. It represents growth and new life. Its circular shape suggests continuous movement whilst the inner coil implies a return to its source. It is a dominant symbol in Māori art. She did not complete the reflection on this project due to her frequent absences from school.

Lynn (15), on the other hand offered a more complex view of relationships, indicative of metacognition. “Um...that you have to think with anything you do you always have to think!” Apparently for her, this thinking does not happen in isolation; it happens with others given that there are two individuals sharing the thought space.

The situation is however problematized by virtue of the fact that though the thinking is happening together, both parties aren’t necessarily receiving the same information since it seemingly leads to the multiplication of the question. Or, is it really two distinct individuals that are trying to have a dialogue? Could the other person be an alter ego? Could the challenges imposed by the thinking process lead to a fragmentation of the self?

*Conflict*

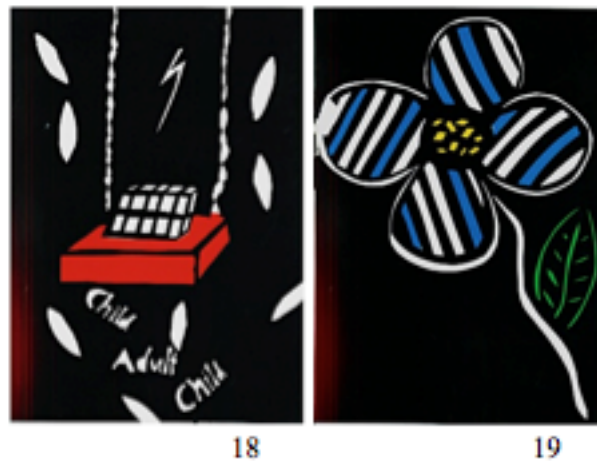


Figure 12 Conflict

Conflicts are part of the fabric of everyday life. The two students whose works are represented by this theme offer us a window into the conflicts that beset them. In both cases, the conflicts are externally imposed but in the latter there is the suggestion that one can take conflict onto themselves by virtue of buying into the opinions of the wider society.

Rose (18) explained that she was trying to communicate “the lifestyle of a teenager today.” She continued, “Teenagers are caged in with their voices. They are expected to act like an adult but we are treated like a child.” The focal point of the image appears to be a swing. Its ambiguity is further heightened as the object on it may be likened to a present and a cage at once, suggestive of the tensions and the duality that she referred to. The swing hints at the playful and joyous pleasures of childhood whereas the lightning symbol seems to suggest there is impending danger. The red used as the seat of the swing is also reminiscent of a hot seat. Her conceptual choices are both evocative and provocative.

Peta (19) applied a more general critique of adolescence. She stated, “I cut a picture of a flower that represents the forgotten beauty and individuality of each person throughout

their strive to reach the perfection that they don't realize they already have." She went on to say,

In my papercut, the flower as a whole represents the 'perfection' that society seems to enforce amongst kids my age, making them feel the need to achieve a certain level of perfection. The straight, structured lines of the petals indicate boys and girls of this generation who are all the same trying to 'fit in' with the crowd. Whereas the random cut-outs right in the middle of the flower symbolize uniqueness and individuality that seem to have become lost in people's strive for perfection.

### *Social Justice*

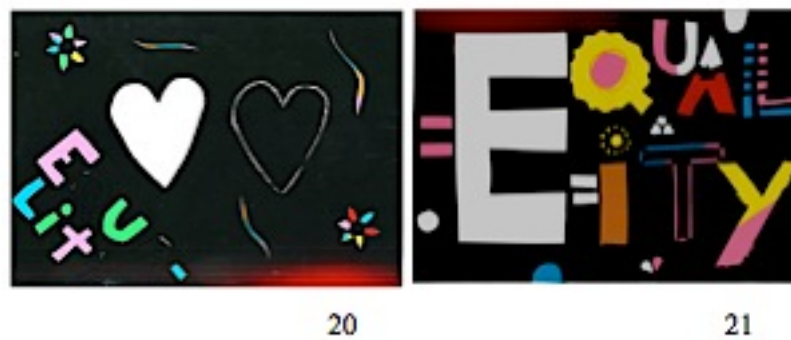


Figure 13 Social Justice

Based on the students' interpretations of their artworks shown above, the thread that comes through is one of social justice. The text in both works says equality; in the former example this is less obvious because the letters, Q and A are the same colour as the background. Both students attempted to place emphasis on the word by writing all or part of the word with block letters and through the use of multiple colours to suggest diversity.

Elizabeth (21) offered a basic explanation of her work. She said the work communicated the need to "treat everyone and everything equally." Alya offered a similar reasoning but contextualised her response by saying, "I watched the movie, *The Help* and it made me think more about that racism is not ok and a person is a person no matter the

colour.” She considered her work successful on this basis: “I’m putting through a good message that I care about.”

### *Identity*



Figure 14 Identity

Identity is another thread that emerged in this assignment. The artworks above offer a glimpse into the ways that some students grapple with the concept. Megha (22) stated, “This is a girl that is praying. This is very important in our religion”. This comment, as I’ve noted elsewhere (Barrett & Greenwood, 2013), struck a parallel for me with a statement I read in an article by Willinsky (1998) called, *Where is Here?* Like Kathy in Willinsky’s article, the student’s response was at once “banal” and “extraordinary” (p. 6). It seemed to be an assertion of history, culture, spirituality and pride. As a student from another country and culture who appeared isolated, it might be that she felt the need to embrace and affirm that characteristic feature that defined her sense of place.

Ken (23) similarly identified religion as an important marker of his identity. He stated, “I was trying to say that I am musical and religious.” Jane (24), did not provide an explanation of her artwork but there are strong visual cues provided through the imagery of the panda and the bamboo plant that might be considered to be references to her Asian heritage. Angus (25), on the other hand, appropriated the imagery from the school crest. He did not offer an explanation of his design choices but the combination of the crest features



and his initials may indicate that his schooling context is an important constituent of the way he identifies himself.

### *Media Influences*

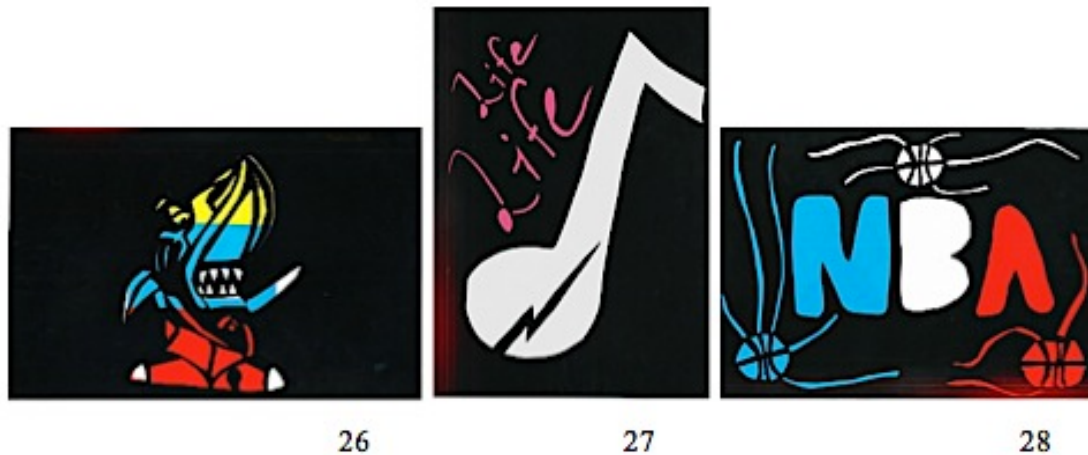


Figure 15 Media Influences

Media influences form the last thread that runs through these artworks. Neither Horace (26) nor Edgar (28) offered an explanation of their artwork but the influence of the media is evident in their works. The images reference what appears to be the main character from the film, *Shark Tale* and the *National Basketball Association (NBA)*, respectively. This may provide an indication of the extent to which these students' interests are shaped by their interconnections with the wider world, particularly, American pop culture.

Teri (27), in describing her artwork, stated, "I have chosen this design because the only feeling you can feel without being hurt is music." She further explained, "I believe music/lyrics can bring the world together and sometimes it can send across a message to people around the world and also can make others feel better." She noted further that music was her escape and that it was her constant irrespective of how much things had shifted in her life.



## **Project II: Personal Philosophies**

Quite a number of the artworks above reflect strong philosophical underpinnings. The works that follow are an attempt to tease these out further. The justification for the project aligns with UNESCO *Road Map for Arts Education*'s (2006) vision for the use of the arts to cultivate in learners, "a moral compass, a capacity for critical reflection [and] a sense of autonomy" (p. 4). After defining philosophy for the students as a way of life and a frame of mind that guides our perspectives, they offered several reasons why a personal philosophy might be useful.

For instance, Nana said it was necessary "to establish morals and have something to live by. Something to give you hope". Dan explained further that its utility was in having "something to follow and believe in to help you out when you are in a bad spot". Jane added, "it might be useful because sometimes when you're lost in life and about to give up your philosophy might make you regain your confidence and try harder." Another justification offered by Roswin was, "a question could be asked to do with your beliefs. Then you would have a secure sense in what you do follow."

On these premises I asked the students to identify some philosophies that they recognized from popular culture. The most popular contribution was "You Only Live Once" (YOLO), an acronym they commonly used in their private conversations. Its popularity was not unique to this group of students however as YOLO was recorded as one of the most frequently used slang terms of 2012 in youth culture (Judkis, 2012; Patel, 2012). The Canadian rapper, Drake is credited for popularizing the slang through the hook of his song, "*The Motto*." The words are, "You only live once, that's the motto... YOLO, and we 'bout it every day, every day, every day." The slang has been criticized for its association with reckless behavior (The Washington Post; The Huffington Post).

## Re-MARKING PLACES

Following our discussions, the students were asked whether they had personal philosophies and if not, they were asked to create one that was authentic to the way they conceived of life. They were asked to write these out and to create a text-based artwork that communicated this philosophy. To support the process, I showed them some examples of text-based art.

Whilst I encouraged the use of symbolism, the artmaking boundary provided was that the image had to be constructed with text. Further scaffolding was provided through a thorough exploration of the elements and principles of design using a number of artworks that represented different art genres. This was especially to support those who demonstrated compositional challenges in the previous activity.

Like the previous set of artworks, the finished set of philosophy-based artworks also revealed some overlapping themes such as stewardship, transitions, optimism, social justice, identity and relationships. As was done with the papercut exercise, the ways that the students interpreted these concepts are articulated below based on the themes that emerged from both the artworks and their reflections on them.

## Stewardship

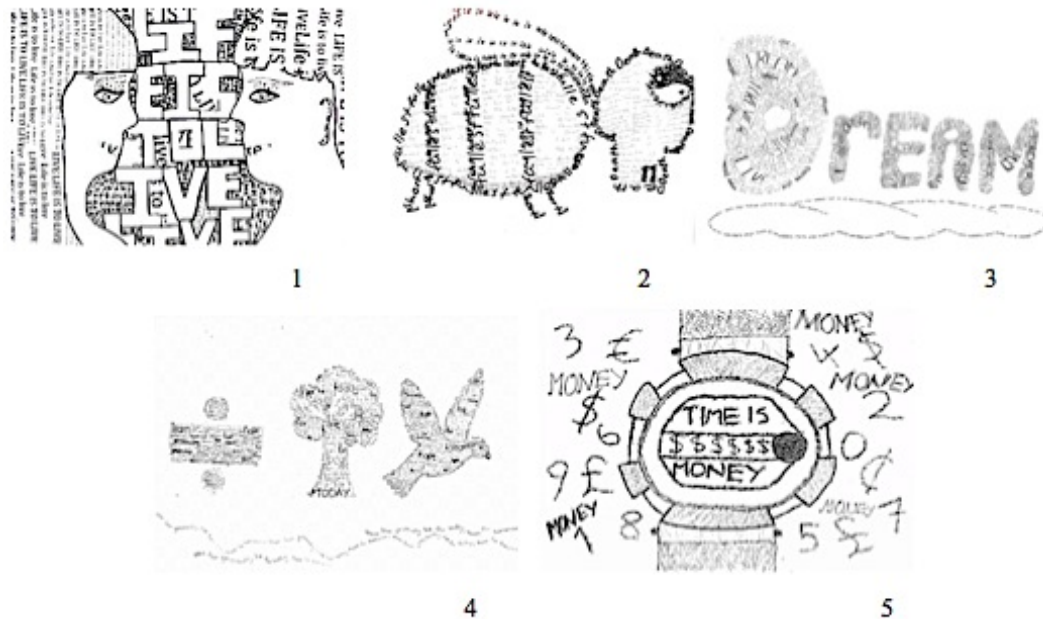


Figure 16 Stewardship

According to *Dictionary.com*, stewardship is “the responsible overseeing and protection of something considered worth caring for and preserving.” In this body of work, the students’ translations of stewardship pertained to the ways they governed their daily lives. In the case of Sia (1), she believed, “*Life is to live.*” Though this may seem like an obvious association she made this distinction, “Life is not just breathing” rather “its purpose is to enjoy and use it.” In describing her design choices she referenced the hongi, which she said “symbolises the air we breathe.”

The hongi is a traditional Māori greeting that serves a similar purpose as a formal handshake in Western societies. The act involves the pressing together of foreheads and noses by two individuals simultaneously at an encounter. During the hongi, the ha (or breath of life) is said to be exchanged. In like manner, Sia’s work features two individuals, female and male with the words of her philosophy being the “shared breath” or the binding element between

them. Relationships, she concluded are part of the “things which make living worthwhile and fun.”

Both Oprah (3) and Peta’s (4) outputs complemented Sia’s philosophy. They introduced a time component by acknowledging the past, present and future. In Oprah’s context, the admonition was to “*Learn from yesterday, live for today and hope for tomorrow.*” Whilst the philosophy is not original (as prescribed by the assignment guidelines), and is accredited to Albert Einstein, Oprah nonetheless considers it applicable for negotiating life. In unpacking the symbolism in the work she noted, “a plus symbol for learn. A tree for today so it shows the growth of today. A dove for hope so it shows the dove is hope”.

Peta also used a non-original quote by James Dean, “*Dream as if you will live forever. Live as if you will die today.*” She presented these paradoxes to emphasize the necessity of making the most of the circumstances in which we find ourselves. As a design consideration, she made the word dream the focal point of the work. In the context of the artwork to dream is to have a strongly desired goal or purpose.

Similarly, Mac’s (2) philosophy is, “*Life is short so live it to the fullest.*” He explained, “You need to do what you want and when. Take all the opportunities because life is just too short.” He went on to clarify his design choices, “I chose to use the skull to communicate death. The Ying Yang symbol to communicate live. The bee to communicate a fat, full life and the small legs to say that life is short.” He further expounded, “I broke up the philosophy to emphasize the words which are important more than the other.” Like Peta and Oprah, Mac’s philosophy was a borrowed one from William Shakespeare appropriated through his conceptualization of its meaning.

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Ryan's (5) interpretation of stewardship aligned with the previous perspectives. He said, "*Time is money.*" It is a phrase often used in everyday communication to speak to the commodification of time and things generally. Consequently, it alludes to the need to make time count. What is apparent through this set of artworks is the students' recognition that reinventing the wheel is not an absolute as the works they produced did not exist in a vacuum and often referenced other sources.

### *Transitions*

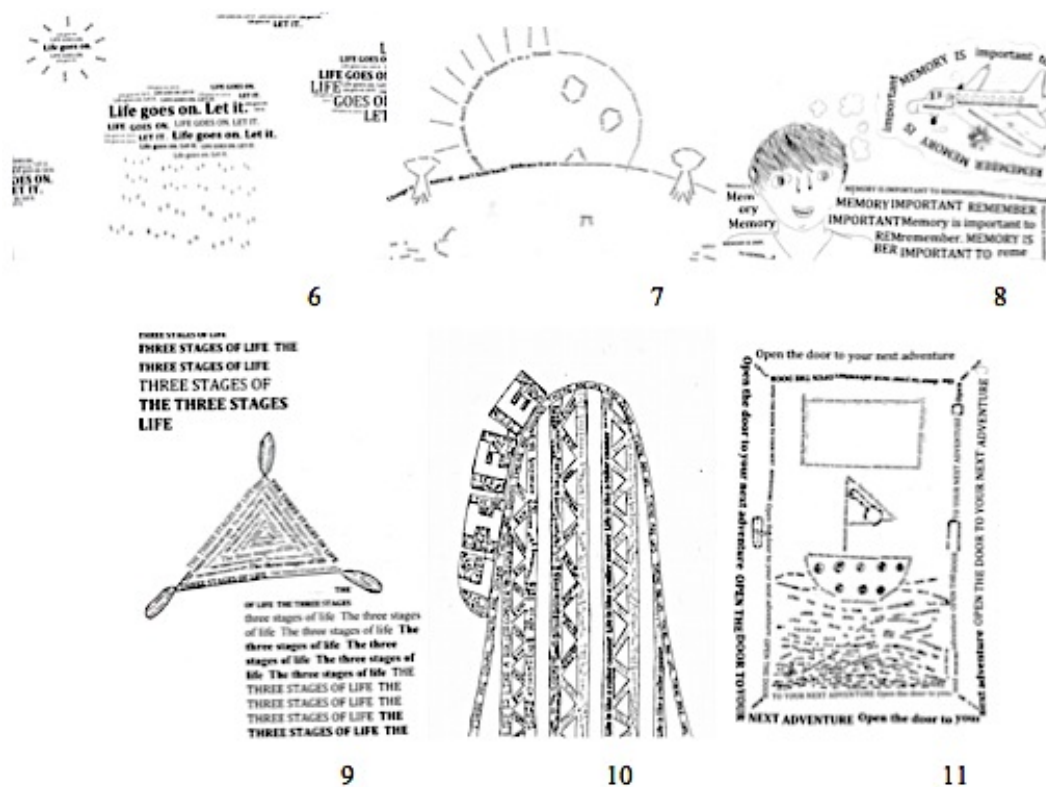


Figure 17 Transitions

Transitions were another common thread that arose from this project. Adolescence is a period of transition from a child to adult. As is true of the physical changes that occur in the bodies of adolescents, there are also developmental, emotional, psychological and philosophical transitions that they must negotiate. The students' sharings in the examples

## Re-MARKING PLACES

shown here reflect an acceptance that change is a fundamental part of life and as such requires adjustment of positions as these changes arise.

Roswin (9) borrowed the idea of reincarnation to illustrate her philosophy, “*The three stages of life.*” Not only does she recognize that these are fundamental stages all human beings must go through, she also sees their interconnectedness as indicated by the loops at the end of each point of the triangle drawn. The loops facilitate going back and forth and in between the stages hence any idea of linearity is eliminated in her depiction.

Dan (7) conceded to the inevitability of change by saying, “*Change is natural, don’t hold back, embrace it as a friend.*” He likened change to the seasons, to day and night and to growing older. The admonition to “embrace [change] as a friend”, hints at the prevalence of a sense of trust despite being confronted with one’s fears, for like a friend, change would only desire what is best for you.

A well-known Māori whakataukī (proverb) says, “*Kia whakatomuri te haere whakamua*” which when interpreted means, *I walk backwards into the future with my eyes fixed on the past.* It alludes to the past being a holder of the ingredients for the future’s success and, moreover that time is not linear but cyclical in nature. In a complementary way, Lennox (8) contended, “*Memory is important to remember.*” He illustrated this through a self-portrait and a memory cloud of a plane ride he took in the past. He spoke of the importance of relishing events of the past. For him, such a philosophy is important to, “give you something to think about.”

Jane (10) dispelled stable notions of life by likening it to a roller coaster. This metaphor holds ideas of ups and downs; excitement and fear; intensity and relief together in one breath. She suggested that despite life’s ebbs and flows, it should be enjoyed. Tash (11) expressed corresponding sentiments in her philosophy, “*Open the door to your next*

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*adventure.*” Pictured is a transparent door that looks out onto the ocean where a boat has set sail. This might suggest that we create the doors in our lives and adventure is the key that makes the things beyond the door/s accessible especially since the path cannot be foreseen. The admonition then is to take life’s journey in strides—as it occurs—and to enjoy it.

Finally, Lexy (6), through her simple but profound philosophy, helps us approach transitions. She said, “*Life goes on. Let it.*” She explained that nature was used to convey this idea, “Because even though things that people do affect it. It keeps going, the seasons keep changing and nothing can stop that.”

## Optimism

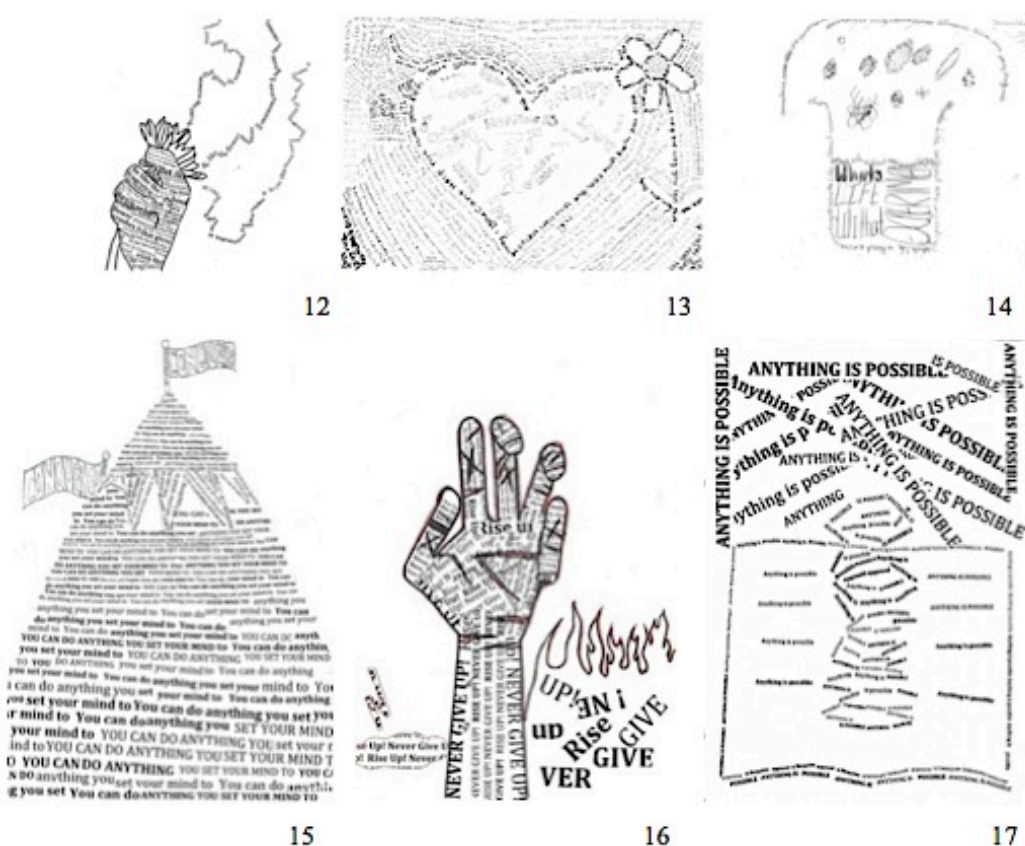


Figure 18 Optimism

Some say the glass is half empty whilst others prefer to see it as being half full. Optimism persists in the face of negativity and the students in this project suggest that

optimism is an important philosophical orientation that guides their negotiation of their senses of self, place and community. The tragic February 22, 2011 Christchurch earthquake that still leaves visible signs of its impact three years onward was a significant challenge that these students faced. Horace (16) drew upon this reference as a metaphor for the daily struggles that people endure. He aptly chose the symbolism of a hand seemingly scarred but nonetheless determined to hold on to any presence of hope.

His philosophy stated, "*Rise up. Never give up!*" It was adopted from the Māori phrases "Kia Kaha" (be strong/never give up) and "E Tū" (stand up/rise up!); a phrase commonly used in messages of support for Cantabrians<sup>15</sup> regarding the aforementioned dilemma. The hand in this context is a clever appropriation of the popular clenched fist, which has a number of significations but commonly represents unity and solidarity amongst oppressed people and resistance in the face of violence.

Lynn (15) and Angus (17) shared very similar philosophies that spoke to the power of belief. Lynn said, "*You can do anything you set your mind to.*" She chose the imagery of a mountain with a flag at the top saying "conquered". The mountain represents our greatest fears, insecurities and challenges and the flag at its summit as depicted is a marker that the journey had been accomplished.

Angus used the phrase, "*Anything is possible.*" He explained that, the shape is a book with a whirlwind thing coming out of it to show anything is possible." Through juxtaposing the whirlwind and the book which are not congruent symbols as well as the random placements of the text and the contained book-like symbol he felt he had shown "that something that is not possible becomes possible.

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<sup>15</sup> Persons from the province of Canterbury, New Zealand are called Cantabrians. Christchurch is the main city in this province.



## Re-MARKING PLACES

Both Alya (13) and Hana (12) focused on the importance of an attitudinal shift in circumstances beyond our control. Alya summed up this position by saying, *“You can’t help the way you feel but you can help the way you act.”* She illustrated a heart with a range of good and bad emotions within it. Just adjacent to the heart is a flower. One interpretation might be that our positive responses will cause us to be like the flower.

Hana zoned in on the characteristics of the flower to represent her philosophy. Borrowing the ideas from Imam Ali, a famous Muslim Caliph, she stated, *“Be like the flower that gives its fragrance to even the hand that crushes it.”* She explained,

The crushed flower shows that people will get in your way as it says even the hand that crushes it. It symbolizes that there are people who will get in your way or you might be rejected in life but you should always have a positive outlook. If people treated you in a cruel manner and if you were about to treat them back disrespectfully, what would make you any different than them after all?

The last work that represents the theme optimism was created by Sasha (14) whose outlook was, *“What is life without experimenting?”* In justifying her philosophical choice she referenced the popular saying, “Don’t knock it till you try it” which resonates with the YOLO vein of thinking described above. The imagery both represents her love for science and quest for discovery and wonderment.

*Social Justice*

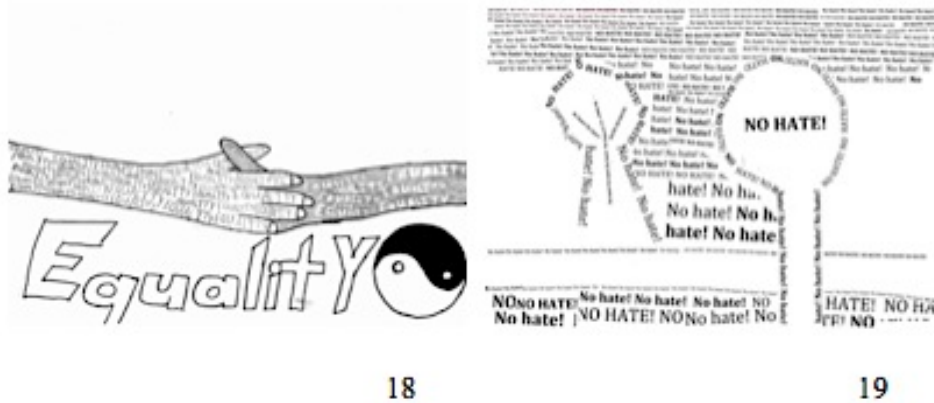


Figure 19 Social Justice

The theme of social justice was evident in the above artworks. In Dane’s (18) case, his philosophy is summed up in one word “*Equality*.” He drew what appears to be a handshake between a black and a white person. The word “equality” appears in white text on the black hand and in black text on the white hand. Also pictured next to the hand is a yin-yang symbol.

In Chinese philosophy, yin represents the shady side, femininity and the moon and yang refers to the sunny side, masculinity and the sun. Yin is the black side with the white dot in it, and yang is the white side with the black dot in it. Both yin and yang are interdependent. Dane did not provide further reflection of the work but based on the symbolism it might be interpreted that he is inviting us to focus on the ways in which we complement each other rather than the ways that we are different.

***Identity***



20

Figure 20 Identity

Identity is an evident construct in Lisa's (20) philosophy, "*You're a shining star. You shine in your own way.*" The work features a star shape with the words shine packed tightly inside it. The denseness of the star filled shape contrasts with the surrounding emptiness only broken by her philosophy statement written faintly in the top right hand corner of the composition. Though Lisa did not elaborate further on the meaning of this work, it might be construed to address her challenges in fitting into groups, a challenge witnessed on several occasions in my time with her.

I observed how reserved she was on most occasions and noted that it took some time for her to embrace the idea of being in a group. It seemed to be a matter of not knowing how to fit in, since she was not as extroverted as the other members of her group. Given this information, it may be possible to interpret the clustering of the word shine as self-reinforcement to validate her unique way of being.

*Relationships*



Figure 21 Relationships

Featured above are three works that are centered on the theme of relationships.

Elizabeth (22) brought to light some of the dynamics associated with relationships through her philosophy, *"Seeing is believing."* Pictured is a girl with a pair of glasses on. Her expression might be interpreted as one of surprise due to the way her mouth is open. Interestingly, the pair of glasses reflects what she is looking at. Elizabeth did not provide further explanation of the work but it might be construed that what she saw was enough to base her beliefs on.

Meg (23) in a similar vein stated, *"Trust is a two way thing."* It features two hands joined at the pinky fingers; a gesture carried out by two parties as a sign of agreement. In our discussion of the work, she noted that it demonstrates the interdependence of the individual parties and shows that the success of their relationship is contingent on them being able to trust each other.

Finally, Nana (21) posited, *"It is better to be friends than enemies."* She explained, "To have someone be nice to you is better than being on your own." To communicate her philosophy visually, she depicted a handshake as the focal point of the image, with the word love written within the hands in both English and Chinese characters. A handshake is a

symbol of greeting, parting, trust or equality, an agreement, or a compromise. I read this work as suggesting that sometimes compromises are necessary for relationships to remain intact.

### *Negotiations*

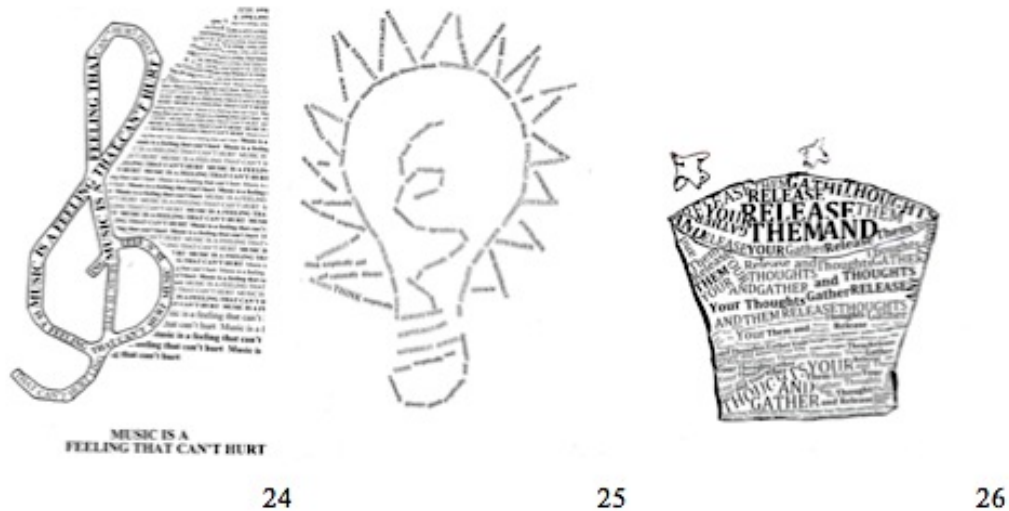


Figure 22 Negotiations

Negotiations have to do with getting over, through, or around (something) successfully. We all encounter this process in our daily lives. For the adolescents in this project, much of their negotiations had to do with balancing their worlds at school and within their respective communities. Personal values and morals serve as a useful form of mediation in these instances and in accordance individuals usually develop some form of outlet to manage their crises.

For Teri (24), that outlet was music. She said, “*Music is a feeling that can’t hurt.*” It brings to mind the popular *Trench Town Rock* song by Bob Marley whose opening line says, “*One good thing about music, when it hits you, you feel no pain.*” She drew a treble clef musical symbol to depict her philosophy. She explained, “I’ve chosen this design because the only feeling you can feel without being hurt is music. Music is a feeling that can’t hurt you.”

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Kan (26) on the other hand admonished, “*Gather your thoughts and release them.*” It suggests a careful process of mulling over the issues by which one is confronted and consciously expressing them. He explained, “I guess I’m trying to get people to speak their mind. It may encourage them to speak freely.” He further clarified, “The biggest object is a basket and the smaller ones are birds...A basket is something to gather things in and the birds are free.” Kan was quite reserved and so it is interesting that he placed emphasis on getting persons to speak their minds.

Megha (whose work is not represented above), identified forgiveness as her means of release. Her philosophy stated, “*The most merciful person is the one who forgives when he is able to revenge.*” In conveying the importance of her philosophy she noted, “It had been told long time ago from our great leaders. This symbol describes merciful people and reminds us of happiness. It helps us to forget the revenge and be nice in future.” Henry (25) an avid reader and philosopher at heart introduced yet another outlet. His philosophy stated, “*Always think skeptically and rationally.*”

### **Hongi with Self**



Figure 23 Hongi with Self (Excerpt from My Visual Journal)

Like the design of this chapter, my positionality in this research is also relational. My personal history, biography, gender, social class and ethnicity are all constituted in the understandings, knowledge and values that I bring to the research process and the interpretation of it (Eisner, 2008; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Hertz, 1997; Sikes, 2011; Stanley, 2014). Accordingly, I engage in forms of reflexivity throughout to try to “ethically regulate” my interventions (MacLure, 2003 in Sikes, 2011, p. 362).

As indicated by Fig. 23 above, the reflexivity takes the form of a hongi with my own self. The closed and open eyes displayed are indicative of both strangeness and familiarity. Sometimes I had to close my eyes to the things I knew or the forms of knowing that I had considered universal in order to experience new insights.

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I came to the research as an experienced visual arts teacher and teacher educator. Having worked in the field for a considerable time it was easy to take for granted that things should work in the ways they had always worked and so throughout the lesson I had to stop and hone my artist, researcher and teacher selves. This helped me take stock of the ways in which they were implicated in the research and influenced or inhibited the outcomes they generated.

Through this visual note I have interrogated the ‘self’ at the heart of the teaching/research encounter. Similarly, the works that follow are designed to help the students to ‘look again’ at themselves in order to unpack their identities.

### Project III: Self-Portraits



Figure 24 Self-Portraits of Artists Used as Exemplars for Project II

The previous artmaking projects allowed some insights into the things that the students found meaningful and the ways they conceive of ‘being’ in the world. This project involved an up close examination of how the students saw themselves through the medium of self-portraits. Whilst the techniques employed did not vary greatly from traditional approaches to portraiture (using the grid method and representational painting), the investigative turn that it put on the activity over merely reproducing a mirror image, sets it



apart. The explorations helped the students to come to an understanding of how our identities are socially constructed.

To set the tone for the activity, we defined a self-portrait as a representation of the artist, by the artist and noted that the representation could either be realistic or abstracted and could be explored through a variety of media. To contextualize this understanding we looked at traditional and contemporary examples in a variety of media and styles (see Fig. 24). The process engaged a brief history of self-portraits that disclosed that the form was popularized when mirrors became more accessible and the individual as a subject garnered more intrigue. We also looked at how historically males were represented with more frequency than women in self-portraits, generating critiques by some female artists like Cindy Sherman, who asserted her place through works such as *Self-Portrait as a Renaissance Woman*.

Our discussion also focused on the ways that self-portraits can be very telling in terms of how the person positions him/herself in the piece and what they include in the picture. We considered how these design considerations often served to challenge notions of the self, of gender, of race and one's sociocultural position within society. Vicky Thomas' Self Portrait #1 and Self Portrait #2 (numbers 8 and 10 of the artist exemplars above) were shown as examples of this projection. In the portraits she challenges stereotypes about what it means to be Māori.

In this vein we examined the elements within the exemplars such as lines, textures, forms and colours to interpret what their creators may have wanted us to know about their personalities, interests and lifestyles through viewing them. The students were informed that they would be creating self-portraits and were asked to envisage how they would want to be represented, and the stories they would want to communicate. To facilitate the process I took photographs of them with my digital camera, which they vetted and were allowed to re-take

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them in instances where they were not satisfied with the original photographs. This was important to ensure that the students ‘controlled’ the ways that they were being represented.

Once everyone was satisfied with his or her image I printed both black and white and coloured versions and distributed them. The black and white versions were to help with the gridding process that followed, whilst the coloured version was to help students to represent their skin tones ‘realistically.’ A brief lesson was taught on the grid method, a method used by artists to transfer or enlarge an original image and facilitate accurate representation of proportions. I also gave a demonstration of the process.



Figure 25 Students transferring A4 images to their gridded A3 sheets

The assignment had two phases: the first involved a pencil drawing whilst the second involved a painted self-portrait. To commence the process, students drew a grid over their reference image and then drew a grid of equal ratio onto the A3 paper. They then began the process of transferring the image one square at a time (see Fig. 25 above).

This was their first experience of using this technique and most of the students caught on easily and found the process enjoyable. They were intrigued by the mathematical

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connections they made. A few however found it a bit challenging and in these instances I provided extra scaffolding to ensure that they caught up with the rest of the class.

The grid method was particularly useful in helping some of the students to overcome their fear of drawing. Rather than focusing on the big picture, I encouraged them to concentrate on the details within each square. Some of the results at various stages are depicted below (see Fig. 26).



Figure 26 Self-Portraits Drawn Using the Grid Method

The HOD and I were satisfied with the quality of the drawings generally and in some cases, pleasantly surprised by the outputs. As we discussed the second phase of the project however, she suggested that it might be useful to retake the photographs as some of the gridded drawings appeared staged and lacked originality. For this reason, we identified a few of the drawings that seemed to capture the students' personalities that could be presented as exemplars on the following day.

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The decision was to help the class to conceive of more original perspectives that they might bring to the assignment. We also replaced the regular A3 paper used for the drawings with canvas paper to ensure that the surface would have the durability to withstand the painting. To help motivate the students for the painting phase of the project, I shared the results of a portrait that I was working on at the time in its varied stages (see Fig. 27).

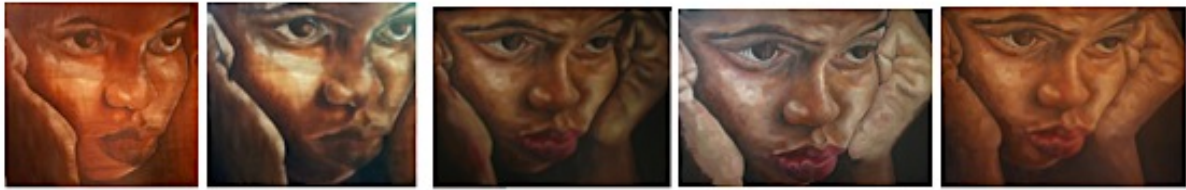


Figure 27 Stages of My Own Process of Creating a Self-Portrait

I demonstrated how to produce values with monotoes in order to parallell the process I had used in my own painting. In this case, we worked with yellow ochre as an undertone. I then taught students how to build up the painting to achieve flesh tones from a mixture of red, yellow, blue and white paints. Each student was subsequently provided with a brush, paints, paper palettes (created from repurposed paper) and a jar of water to experiment with mixing the tones. They were encouraged to modify the percentage of colours used as needed and to match the colours they created against their skin tone in the coloured prints that I had provided earlier for this purpose.

I attended to the students individually to monitor their progress. There were a few cases where the painting became too light or too dark and I helped them to recover aspects of it. When their anxieties set in about messing up their beautiful drawings, I encouraged them to enjoy the process as the medium offered the flexibility of reworking surfaces to cover up what they viewed as mistakes. This aspect of the project went on longer than I had

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anticipated as the process of reproducing the flesh tones was as intimidating as it was enjoyable. They nonetheless invested themselves in the activity. The outcomes at the various stages (see Fig. 28) as well as the finished results (see Fig. 29) are shown below:



Figure 28 Different Stages of the Painting Process

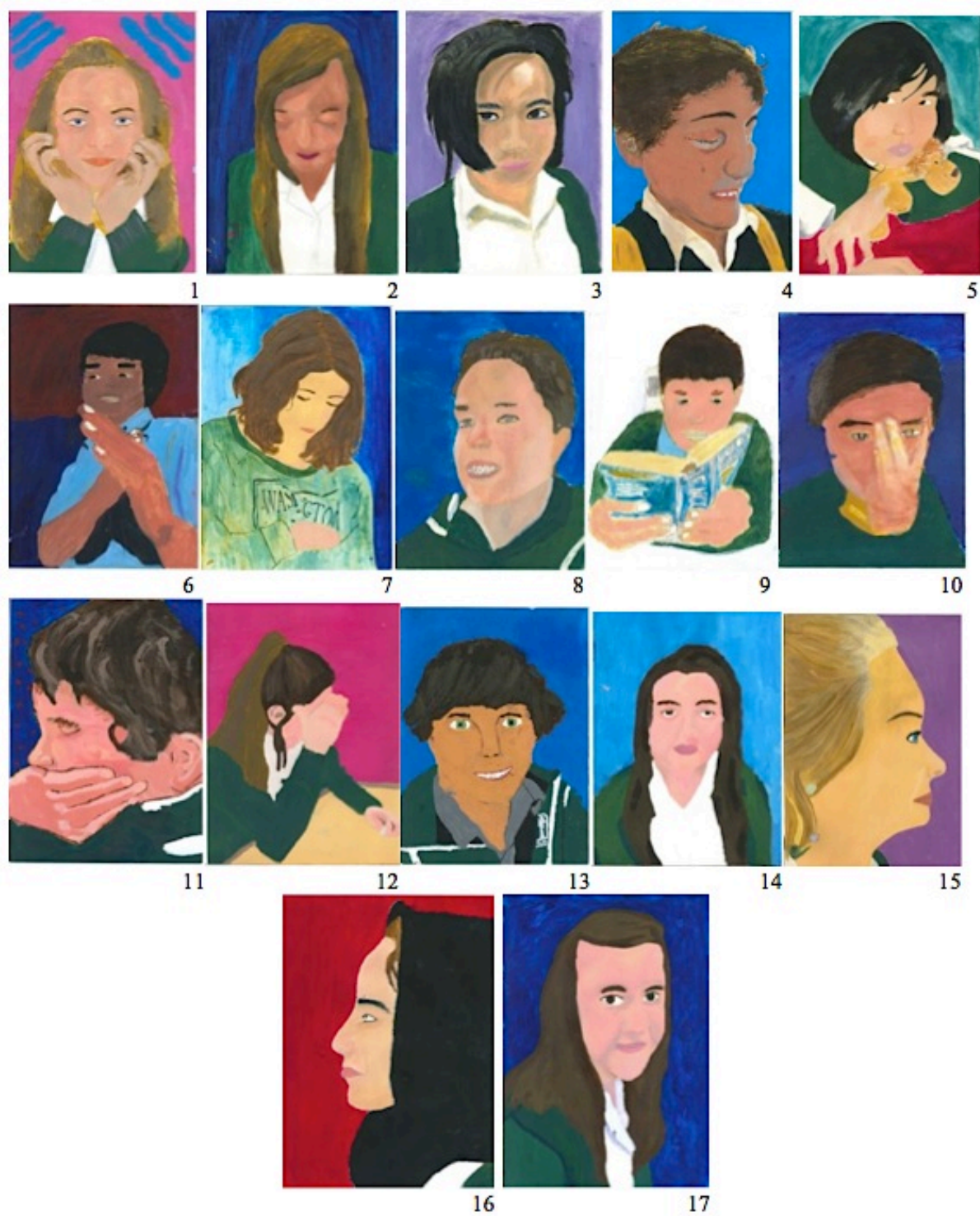


Figure 29 Painted Self Portraits (Part 1)



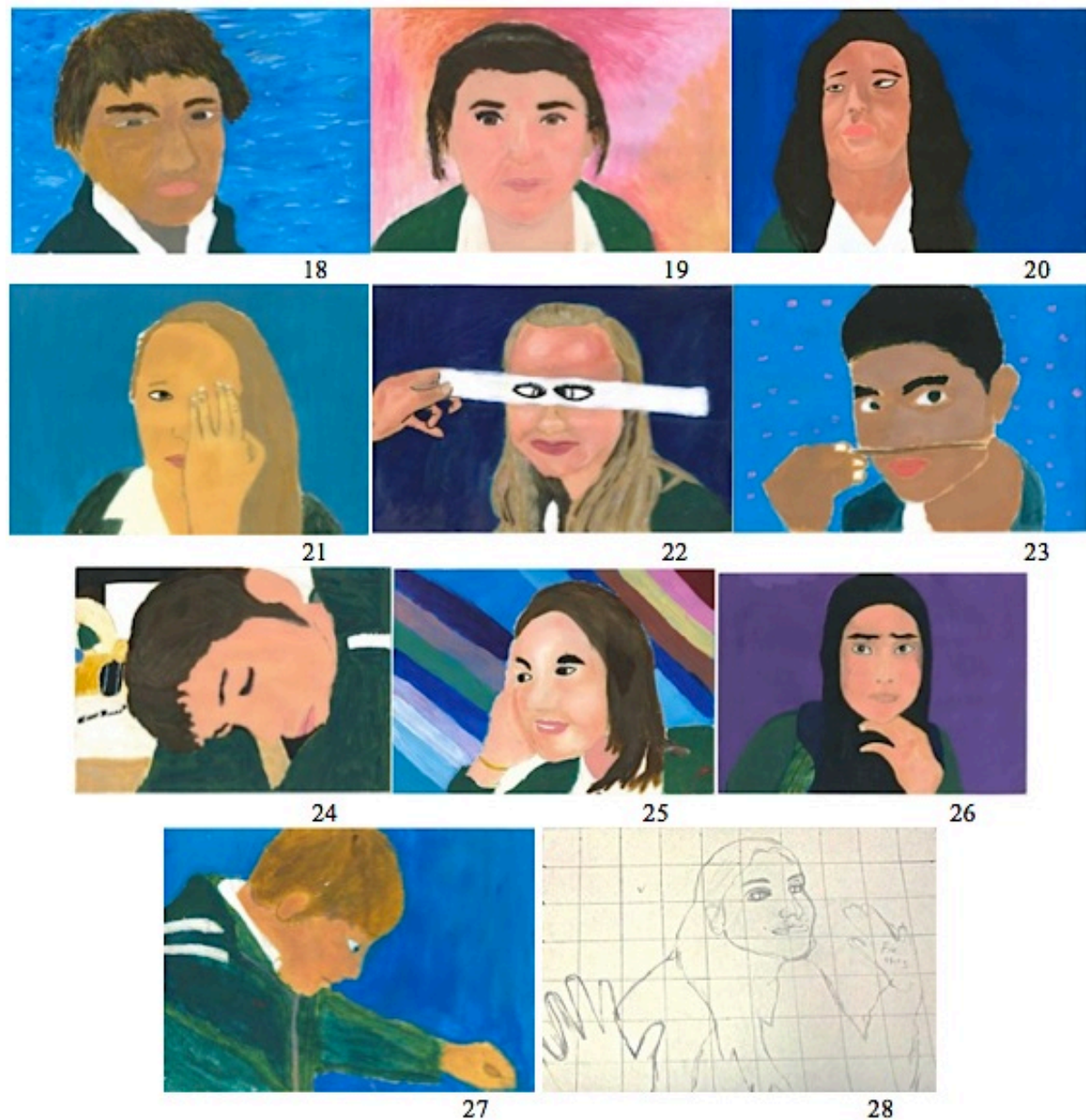


Figure 30 Painted Self Portraits (part 2)

The portraits above (Fig. 30) were accompanied by short descriptions that the students wrote about themselves (some of which were introduced early on in this chapter). Considered collectively, the emergent themes included performance, self-confidence, partial disclosure, hybridity and avoidance.

### **Project 111: Still Life Drawings as Metaphorical Self-Portraits**

Still life compositions are common art projects, often undertaken primarily to enhance students' technical capacities to render things three dimensionally and to bolster their observational skills. This technical focus, however, can potentially serve to filter out the socio-cultural contexts that contributed to this art form and its potential to address contemporary concerns.

Given the visual/material culture that we live in and that everyday inanimate objects provide the subject of this art form, it readily accommodates issues concerning the ways in which our identities are socially constructed. Accordingly, this project built on the emphasis of self-exploration from the previous project by encouraging the students to explore their relationships to the objects that held personal significances for them.

A lesson on the history of still life composition included religious and allegorical symbolism and the use of the art form to showcase a person's wealth or possessions. The many traditional and non-traditional exemplars (see Fig. 31) provided helped to develop students' awareness of the potential of objects that are valued to contribute to a symbolic portrait of oneself. It also helped to make clear that art does not exist in a vacuum.





Figure 31 Exemplars of Still Life Compositions

Students then selected five objects that held personal significance for them and brought them to class, composing the objects as metaphorical self-portraits. They were asked to consider the meanings that the individual objects held and the stories that they collectively told. As the project evolved, I photographed the various still life compositions. This form was chosen over direct observation as a means of managing storage and time constraints.

On reviewing the compositions on the computer, I noticed how strong they were as black and white images and so I boosted the contrast on them to produce a more dynamic range of tones and a chiaroscuro-like<sup>16</sup> effect. The decision was also in keeping with the fact that charcoal, as the chosen medium was conducive to such effects. I then made black and white copies of the images and distributed them to the students.

To facilitate the activity students were taught some basic drawing techniques to help them transform two-dimensional shapes into three-dimensional forms and to help them achieve the illusion of space within their compositions. Since most students were unfamiliar with charcoal as a medium I also demonstrated how to use it to achieve a range of values.

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<sup>16</sup> Chiaroscuro in art refers to the use of strong contrasts between light and dark to achieve a three-dimensional quality.

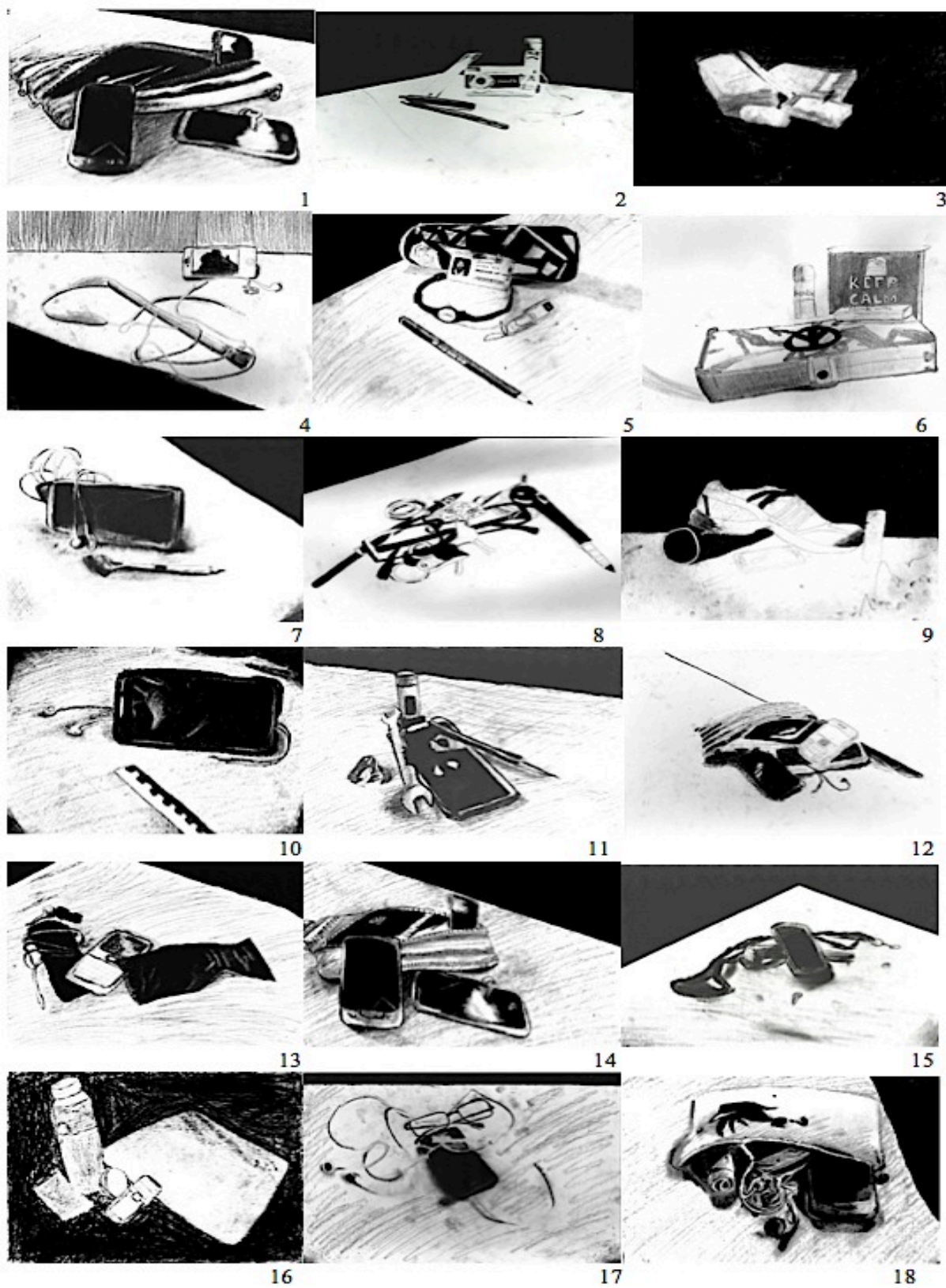
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The concept of chiaroscuro, the use of strong contrasts between light and dark to create volume in modeling three-dimensional forms, was also introduced. Students then worked freely with the charcoal to acquaint themselves with the medium and to experiment with creating a variety of values.

The students enjoyed working with the medium, particularly for the tactile and playful qualities that were involved with rubbing it onto the paper. Once the art works were completed they took them outside where I applied fixative to them to prevent them from smudging in the future. The resulting compositions were very insightful. They may be viewed in Fig. 32 below.

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### Still Life (Metaphorical Self-Portraits)



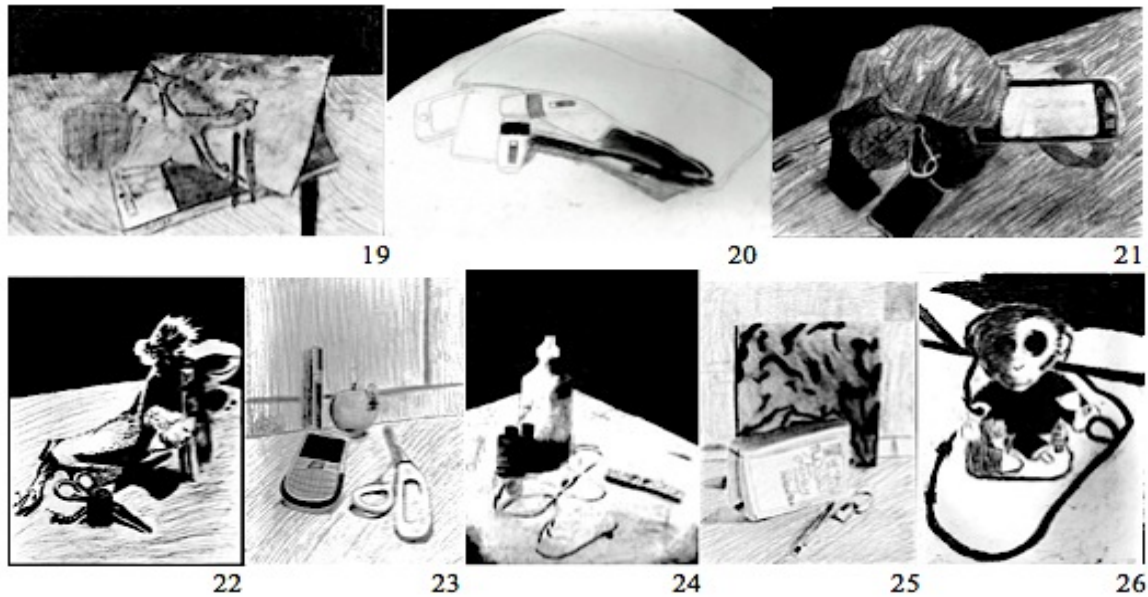


Figure 32 Still Life (Metaphorical Self-Portraits)

It was interesting to note that of the twenty-seven compositions represented, only 10 did not feature a smart phone device. In our discussions many of the students noted that their phones represented the importance of communicating with their loved ones. The other themes that emerged were identity, utility, fantasy, relationships and memory.

#### **Project IV: Collage**

Gude (2000) highlights a long-standing assumption conveyed through the hidden curriculum of many art programs that art projects that emphasize “sole authorship are most worthy of teaching” (p. 79). If contemporary art practices are anything to go by in structuring art curriculum (Walker, 2001), collaborative art projects bring multidimensionality to our conceptions of art education. This art project was developed with this in mind. It inquires into the ways that the students conceived of community, sensed it and assigned value to it. It is also centered on the emergent and expanded meanings students acquired by working together as a community.

The project embraced the assumption that we are products of our communities and that our participation in communities contribute to our senses of self and place and how we view the world generally. To facilitate the enquiry, the students worked in groups, brainstorming the characteristics of community and combining these to develop definitions of the concept. Below (Fig. 33) are some of the findings that they gleaned:

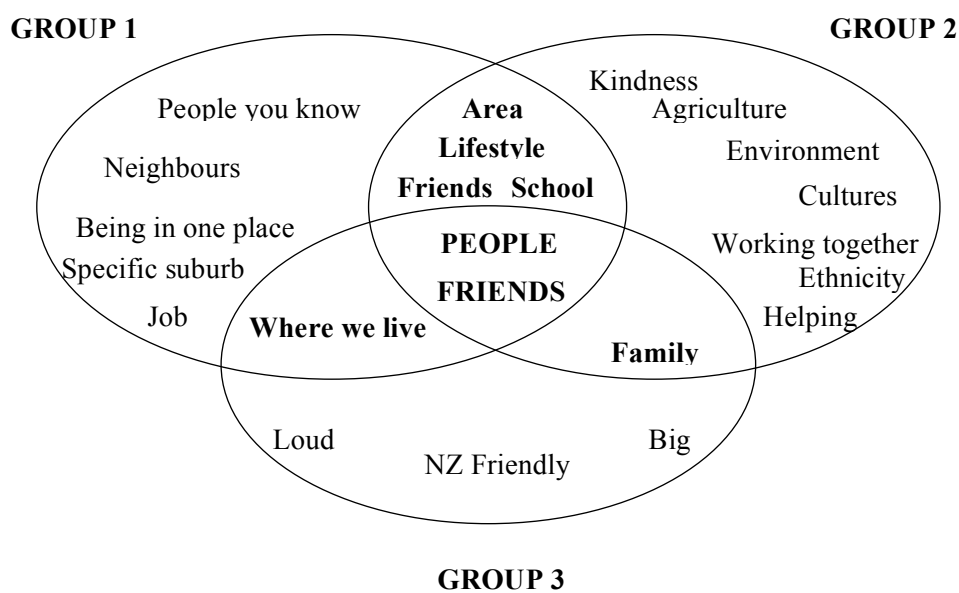


Figure 33 Perceptions of Community

An analysis of the components identified by the group revealed that the first group based their understanding of community on attributes having to do with knowing individuals, living in close proximity to them and through working closely with them. The second group had a slightly different focus, with emphasis on the qualities that foster relationships within community. This group acknowledged and celebrated the differences within a community and unlike any other group they saw the environment as being a vital component in this equation.

The third group highlighted characteristics that presented familiar and distinct attributes that are perhaps understood only by the members within that community. They also

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underscored the importance of communication within community. Across the groups it was found that groups one and three were interested in specificity of location. Groups two and three on the other hand shared emphases on the familial. Taken together, all three groups shared the understanding that communities were concerned mostly with the human element, distinguished by people in general and friends. These seemed to be the communities that were most significant to them.

The students fitted the characteristics they identified together to create definitions of community. Group one said it referred to *“A social group that shares common thoughts and governmental purposes.”* Group two proposed that it consists of *“A group of any size whose members reside in a specific location.”* Group three similarly described community as *“A group of people who share the same culture and live in the same area.”*

Upon analysis of the various group definitions, the class integrated the common threads that they had identified amongst the contributions into one definition. The collective definition offered was that community refers to *“People who communicate and connect with each other.”*

We sought to expand these understandings by identifying characteristics that were generally overlooked. For example, the effects of globalization have created significant shifts in the ways that communities are conceptualized. Whereas the definitions offered allude to physical communities, online communities also play a significant role in the daily lives of many persons today. And, despite submissions that communities are always harmonious, we acknowledged that communities, like the art class itself, are also diverse and thus require effort to manage differences in perspectives and cultural understandings.

The students and I came to the consensus that communities are categorized according to cultural affiliations, nationality, genealogy, interests and beliefs as well as those elements



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that engender in us senses of belonging, safety and security. Collage as an art form consisting of a variety of materials was explored for its potential to symbolically reference the ways different individuals come together and form community. We looked at a variety of collage examples and also briefly discussed the contexts that informed the art form and the individuals credited with its origin.

Leading out of this discussion the students within their groups developed collages based on the big idea of community. An extra group was created to facilitate easier management of the limited resources. In the spirit of community, the group members shared the responsibilities amongst themselves. Featured below are photo documentations of the ways in which they managed tasks. Fig. 34 shows one of the groups sharing the responsibility of painting the background whilst Fig. 35 illustrates how members worked on different aspects of the work (finalizing ideas, tearing paper, pasting paper and there is a palette with brushes that indicates preparation for the task of painting).



Figure 34 Students collaboratively paint the background for their artwork



Figure 35 Students assume various responsibilities in the collage project

The collages are displayed below.



Figure 36 Community Collages

Visually, there are still things that require reconciliation in each of the collages presented above such as figure-ground relationships, in order for them to read beyond a mere



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assemblage of images (see Fig. 36). However, there is evidence that the students were conscious of how their design choices helped to extend their ideas of community.

For example, Group One noted that they deliberately painted the background red to symbolize the happiness and strength of community. They also demonstrated an awareness of subgroups within community through the ways in which they compartmentalized the design layout. They noted, *“We like put all the food stuff over here and then like animals here and then everyone is like friends here”* and *“When we put the hands in the middle it’s like the joining of the community.”* They also included an androgynous character in their composition to highlight that *“you can’t judge a book by its cover [for] you might find someone that’s nice on the outside and ugly on the inside.”*

Group Two spoke about their use of confetti-like dots around the collage to represent that *“a community is really just a big party...a big gathering of people [who] just work together and have fun.”* Like Group 1 they put a binding element in the middle of the composition. They explained, *“we did paint the heart in the middle cause obviously love is the main thing that brings us all together...that’s the core...without love there’s like no community.”*

Group Three’s understanding of community was demonstrated through their painstaking process of tearing and pasting shades of blue and green paper together. The unfinished areas serve as a reminder that communities are always works in progress. The additional group, Group Four, unlike the other groups placed emphasis on the New Zealand community. The strong earthy green colour of the background represents what they believed to be the environmentally friendly nature of the New Zealand community.

To supplement their understandings of community the group was also asked to interview members of their communities who have had a positive impact on their lives or

whom they consider to be role models. The purpose of the activity was to capture intergenerational ideas of what constitutes community and the extent to which the adults' interpretations had bearing on the ways that the students perceived community. Three students carried out this process and they chose to interview their mothers.

### **Depicting Community through Tableaus**

As the class activities progressed, students took on more bodily interpretations of community through the medium of tableau because of its novelty in the visual arts context. Tableaus are still images created with the body to represent a scene. In a tableau performance the participants appear motionless--frozen in action--producing the effect of the still image. The technique is commonly used to explore a moment in a story or drama or from history.

However, its utility also extends to the replication of a photograph or artwork for deeper analysis. The latter usage is what informed this aspect of the project. The students were asked to create tableau based on the big idea of community that they would present to the class. Since community is an everyday word, it is easy for students to rely on simplistic and surface understandings of it. As such, tableaus presented a conceptual strategy that could potentially help them to envisage further connections as they enacted the idea through their bodies.

To facilitate the process, the students formed themselves into four groups. Each group selected a card on which a direct comparison was made between the word, community and everyday references that were chosen based on the definitions of community that they had provided earlier. The metaphorical associations drawn between community and those references were meant to make the complexities and dynamics of communities more accessible. The associations were as follows:

- 1) Community is a window

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- 2) Community is a bowl
- 3) Community is a river
- 4) Community is a mirror

Carrying out performance-related activities in visual arts class was very new to the students; the introductory lesson was the only instance of this technique utilized in the work of this project. Predictably, most of the students were shy initially, but the nature of the activity allowed them to open up themselves to the process fairly quickly. I prioritized process over wrong or right responses, and this appeared to help quell their feelings of vulnerability. Tableau was demonstrated and they were given a few recommendations as a means of scaffolding the process.

To begin with, students were asked to:

- a) consider the physical properties or characteristics of the ‘object’ that community was being likened to.
- b) discuss the functionality of the ‘objects’
- c) brainstorm the ways in which those properties or functions were transferable to the concept of ‘community’.
- d) produce tableaus that demonstrated the strengths and limitations of community (still in reference to the characteristics of the associated objects).

Each group produced two tableaus. In the first instance it showed the strengths of community and in the second, it showed the potential limitations within community. The outputs were generally well thought out. Subsequent to each group’s performance, they were asked to reveal the word that they had selected and to also interpret their tableaus. The other members of the class were then asked to offer feedback (for e.g. if they thought the explanation matched their initial understandings) or to suggest alternative ways that the task

might have been executed. This was an attempt to generate a variety of perspectives around a single idea. Elements of student thinking may be tracked through the visuals below and through the corresponding statements from the students.

### *Community is a Window*



Figure 37 Tableau Depicting a Window

The first tableau scene (Fig. 37) depicted a window-like structure that the students used their bodies to create. A central character represented the main frame that supports the window; he stood with his hands outstretched creating a t-shape. Other group members sat on the ground using their feet to create lines that were parallel with his outstretched hands, and still others stood to complete the depiction of the frame. The spaces in between them represented the panes of glass.

In the alternate scenario, depicting the limitations within community, some of the members showed reluctance in maintaining the frame-like structure and so it appeared somewhat fragmented. From their explanations I gathered that the window provides a view, which may be likened to the way community allows insight into its diverse makeup. I added that the fragility of the frame also compromises the windowpanes, as depicted by some of the

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members' unwillingness to maintain the frame, and this jeopardizes the community's effectiveness.

### *Community is a Bowl*



Figure 38 Tableau Depicting a Bowl

In the first tableau scene, the students used their bodies to create a literal representation of a bowl. To do so they they huddled together with their hands and feet closely joined and formed a circle with their bodies. The frozen scene (see Fig. 38) captured each person leaning backward to make the rim of the circle wider than the base and to mimic a bowl shape. In the second scenario, they retained the bowl shape but one person leaned back too much and caused the circle to break. The scene froze with the person closest to him retrieving his hand and therefore restabilizing the circle.

The group explained that “a bowl holds things” and so their first tableau scene showed them holding onto each other to represent that “communities stay strong together”. But they noted also that communities are fragile as represented by the second tableau where one member was losing ground and the other had to help restore him to his place within the community. They likened it to a chain being as strong as its weakest link and so individuals within community act as good stewards and help each other stay connected.

I contributed that metaphorically, this could also represent the ways that communities evolve. They grow and assume new functions, hence they expand. This expansion process might generate tensions that could potentially cause the community to crack or disintegrate but if others can identify the potential early and get a hold of the situation, it could help to restabilize the community.

### *Community is a River*



Figure 39 Tableau Depicting a River

This tableau (Fig. 39) featured two groups of students (3 on each side) facing each other and creating a wave pattern with their right hands in synchronized fashion. In the alternate scenario, they used their whole bodies to represent the flow by walking back and forth in a synchronized manner. One person stepped out of line and became what appeared to be an obstacle in the path of the others with her hands outstretched. They responded by walking around or under the obstacle.

They explained that their synchronization represented the river following its course in concert with the fact that community members are united through purpose, and as such it is typical for them to have common goals and to operate similarly. They shared that in the second scenario one person became a dam blocking the natural path of the river but nonetheless the river still found its way around. In like manner they said, community

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members can sometimes have other visions for how they want the community to operate and others can get in the way of the community achieving its objectives. However, like the river, the community finds a way around those obstacles to remain intact.

### *Community is a Mirror*



Figure 40 Tableau Depicting a Mirror

In this tableau (Fig. 40), the students stood in two groups facing each other. The individuals on one side performed a series of spontaneous hand gestures and those on the opposite side responded by mirroring the gestures. This created a form of symmetrical balance between the groups. They then switched up the scenario and the responding group began to ignore the actions of the leading group, choosing instead to do as they willed. Metaphorically, they stated that a mirror reflects what it sees and hence they were mimicking each other's actions just as members of a community think and behave similarly.

However, in the case where a mirror is cracked it is possible for the view to be distorted and this affects the image that the mirror reflects. In like manner, they said, there are times when individuals rebel against the core values of the community and it causes a rift. The distortion represents times when the community gets shaken; when the pieces of the mirror are put back, they don't quite fit as before, and so the community becomes reconfigured as something "new."

The groups, through the medium of tableaux, demonstrated the capacity to engage with enduring ideas of community and showed novel ways of interpreting the concept. The following section describes the ways that the preceding community-focused components of the study were translated into a mural project.

### **Mural: Exploring Ideas of Community**

Murals<sup>17</sup> have traditionally been synonymous with communal effort. They represent shared ownership of the stories they communicate. In this vein, they therefore provide empowerment for not only those involved but others who are affiliated with those stories. In the context of this study, the mural project represented the culminating activity and therefore provided an opportunity to synthesize the understandings gained over the course of the study as well as to capture emergent perspectives.

Whereas traditional murals are done on more permanent surfaces, the constraints of time and space required improvisation and so long rectangular sheets of primed canvas fabric were used as an alternative surface. This presented the flexibility of a hanging exhibit that could be displayed, and also taken down to accommodate other purposes.

This project built upon the community metaphors (window, bowl, river and mirror) that were introduced in the previous tableau activity. Four groups of students undertook the task of translating those metaphors visually. They brainstormed related visual symbols that built on their findings from the previous activity and selected colours that they felt communicated their ideas effectively. The results are represented below. The tableaux are once again referenced, as are the working drawings, in addition to the murals to paint a picture of how the artmaking unfolded.

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<sup>17</sup> A **mural** is any piece of artwork painted or applied directly on a wall, ceiling or other large permanent surface.



*Community is a Window*

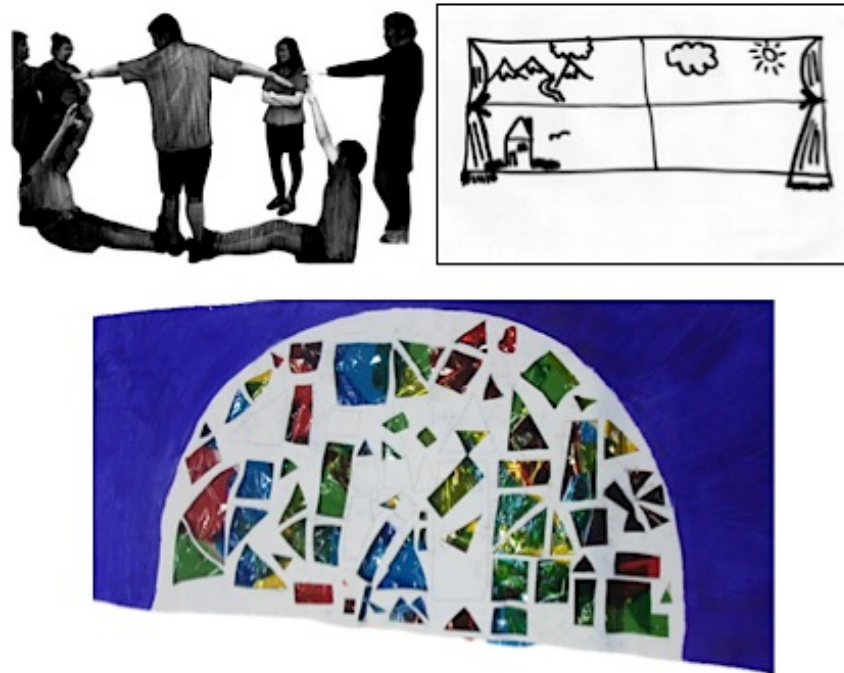


Figure 41 Group 1

By juxtaposing the elements above, it is clear that the translation of the metaphor into visual form was not a straightforward process for Group 1 (see Fig. 41). Whilst creativity and imagination was evidenced in the tableau, in their working drawing they resorted to a safe interpretation of a typical window. However, when given the canvas and cellophane as the primary materials to work with, they seemed to experience a sense of disequilibrium that promoted a resurgence of this imaginative thinking. The order that prevailed in the sketches now gave way to more playful use of the pictorial space.

When questioned about the meaning behind the mural, a group member stated,

It's a window that represents all the different exciting things in a community but it can break easily like a community can and then it will like, fall apart. So it's very fragile but it's also really good while it's still there together.

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The group's conceptual strategy of overlaying the colours of the cellophane to create new colours might be interpreted as representing the fact that communities are dynamic. I shared that through interaction, members may adapt things from each other that either broaden their worldviews, or cause them to adjust their sense of who they are in order to assimilate. They noted that the varied sizes, colours and shapes of the elements that make up the window frame alludes to the "exciting" make-up of the community—its diversity.

In responding to the work I also shared that the sharp edges of the shapes on the other hand, could represent the contestations that arise within community as different cultures interact. To provoke further thinking about their design choices, I asked them to consider whether the transparency of the cellophane gave the appearance of glass or plastic, durability or frailty. And, that whilst time restraints hindered them from cutting out all the shapes, leaving only traces behind, this could also symbolize the fact that communities are a work in progress and that members come into their own at different stages in time.

The artwork in itself provided a good foundation for students to tease out some of the complexities within community. It is only a pity that the premature ending to the class prevented them exploring these issues further. For instance, it would have been useful to hear them elaborate on design choices, such as their reasons for choosing the arch shape, and for using blue as the dominant colour within the composition.

I have been left to wonder about the fact that whilst windows provide transparency and enable us to access other spaces, they also provide a form of containment for our views much like the arch in this mural. The empty spaces presumably allude to a world of possibilities that may be captured within that limited space.

*Community is a Bowl*



Figure 42 Group 2

Unlike Group 1, there is a clear attempt to carry over some of the ideas gleaned from the tableau activity in Group 2's creative process (see Fig. 42). In the sketch presented, there appears to be a bird's eye view of the form they created with their bodies in the tableau scene. However, some transformation was imposed on the mural, as the predominantly circular shape became a rectangle. Whilst this was partially determined by the dimensions of the canvas, it was interesting to see the way students managed to make the rectangle carry similar qualities.

Borrowing from the tableau scene, they arranged the rectangles as links that referenced the way they held hands. Though the drawing within the mural clearly references the working drawing, the choice of not replicating the entire "bowl" shape but rather to represent part of the community adds another dimension to their execution of the ideas.

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Rather than focusing on the ideal, where the community is whole, they placed the emphasis on the alternate tableau scene where one individual helped another person to maintain his ground.

Sometimes we hide behind the mask of community and forget our duties as stewards of each other. This additional interpretation therefore highlights the individual responsibility that community members have to help others stay in the “bowl.” The placement of the figures in the composition alludes to helping another person up. A group member concurred,

When we were linking hands, it’s like the community; we’re like the community. So we’re like together. And then one person pulled out and [another] person from the community pulls the person up and puts him right back in the spot like the Christchurch earthquake. Like yeah, lots of people had no home and toilets or whatever and then the government supported, and supplied the portaloos and stuff.

The reference to Christchurch showed their localization of the interpretation. Further evidence of this came through the justification of their colour choices. They stated, “Red is Canterbury. We want Canterbury colours.” Another member added that it, “symbolizes strength.” And yet another said, it also represented “love”. She added, “Yes, it’s love cause we’ve got two people linking hands and two people are stronger than one. And love is what brings us together.”

It was interesting to see how conscious this group was of the design choices they made; they were deliberate and had meanings embedded in them. The border of the mural was very thin but one is somehow distracted by how unified the shapes and colour scheme are. For me this conjures ideas of consistency and of unity in diversity.

The fact that the forms are silhouetted may have been influenced by the time constraints they faced but could also possibly suggest that community may be achieved in

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spite of ethnic, religious or social differences. Hence, the silhouette could represent any member of the community. Still yet, with the border being so fragile we are reminded of the effort required to maintain community, for the very thing that binds it in this instance, is the thing that could compromise its integrity.

### *Community is a River*



Figure 43 Group 3

The connection between the tableau scene and Group 3's sketch whilst not obvious is a strong one (see Fig. 43). They explained,

Our word was river so we were being the river. And then, S came along and she was going the other way. She is a duck by the way. Yeah, she is a duck. She was swimming the other way, not going with the flow. Cause not everyone is always going in the same way. And then, I was a dam so I was blocking the path but they still found their way around.

They used a square shape in the mural to symbolize the obstacles faced by the community. The main characteristic of a square is that it has four equal sides. Metaphorically, this could allude to the fact that communities can be intolerant of differences. The colours used were literal in most instances, for example, the green represented the land, the blue symbolized water and the duck was yellow. The use of red for the obstacle however took on metaphorical significance: it suggested the dominance of the obstacle.

In concert with the latter point, a return to the commonalities amongst the three stages of the artmaking process presented above also shows the gradual abstraction of the idea. This is evidenced in the way the swimming action was translated to lines that suggested the movement of water, or through the way that the human figure translated to a duck and then to a shape that references the duck by virtue of its “yellow” colour.

It is interesting also to note that this “duck” shape manifested as a door or window or something that has penetrated the obstacle but its capacity is also obviously constrained. What I found most interesting however was the way that the main sketch artist processed her ideas in Korean language even though she was very competent at communicating in English (I will discuss this further in Part 2 of this chapter).

*Community is a Mirror*



Figure 44 Group 4

Group 4 did not submit a sketch of their ideas but similar to the other groups, they obviously carried over the ideas from the tableau into the mural (see Fig. 44). They painted a silhouetted figure looking into a mirror. Like the tableau scene where the mirror no longer gave a true reflection of the image being shown (due to being cracked), in the mural the individual appears magnified and of a different shade. In addition, the mirror does not reflect the raised hands.

Metaphorically, the disparity is justified by their statement that, “people see you how they want to see you.” This could refer to the tendency of people to focus on some areas of your life whilst neglecting other areas and the misunderstandings that arise from this process. Accordingly, the picture they paint of you is an incomplete one. They conceded, “The mirror reflects on his personality because he can’t perceive his own personality...the way the community sees him.”

In justifying their colour choice they said, “yellow is like positivity.” I interpret this in the context of the work to mean that irrespective of the skewed views that members of a community might have of you, it is still important to hold your own and to know your worth. They also acknowledged that, “a community is also a product of ourselves.” Hence, participating in communities allows us to mark them inasmuch as they mark us. The onus therefore is on the members of a community to clarify who they are within the community. In addition, the community needs to recognize and acknowledge the fact that whilst the members share a common interest, the community’s success is not contingent on its membership bearing a singular image.

These series of exercises created a platform to help students to begin to unpack the complexities within community. The conceptual strategies allowed for critical distancing and the abstraction of ideas. These in turn enabled students to forego the natural inclination to draw on obvious or clichéd use of imagery and to begin to articulate their ideas and choices in more sophisticated ways.

Within the following section, as I have discussed in the introductory section to this paper, I will be following the development of selected students through their artworks to track the threads that were recurrent in their artworks. This approach has been taken as a means of capturing the complexities and dynamics that manifested in these contexts.

In the selection process, I was particularly interested in the works where the students’ renderings of themselves were more explicit. Portfolios of works from four students were therefore chosen to illuminate the reverberations evidenced across the projects. These are presented as a mapping of artworks and interpretations in this section. They signify the students’ personal and collective journeys and most importantly, they reflect the students’ voices.



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It is important to note that the mapping does not serve as psychoanalysis of the students but rather represents an attempt to link the exercises together to show how the artworks present a complex and integrated whole.

## Mapping the Threads in Four Students' Artworks

### Roswin's Artmaking Journey

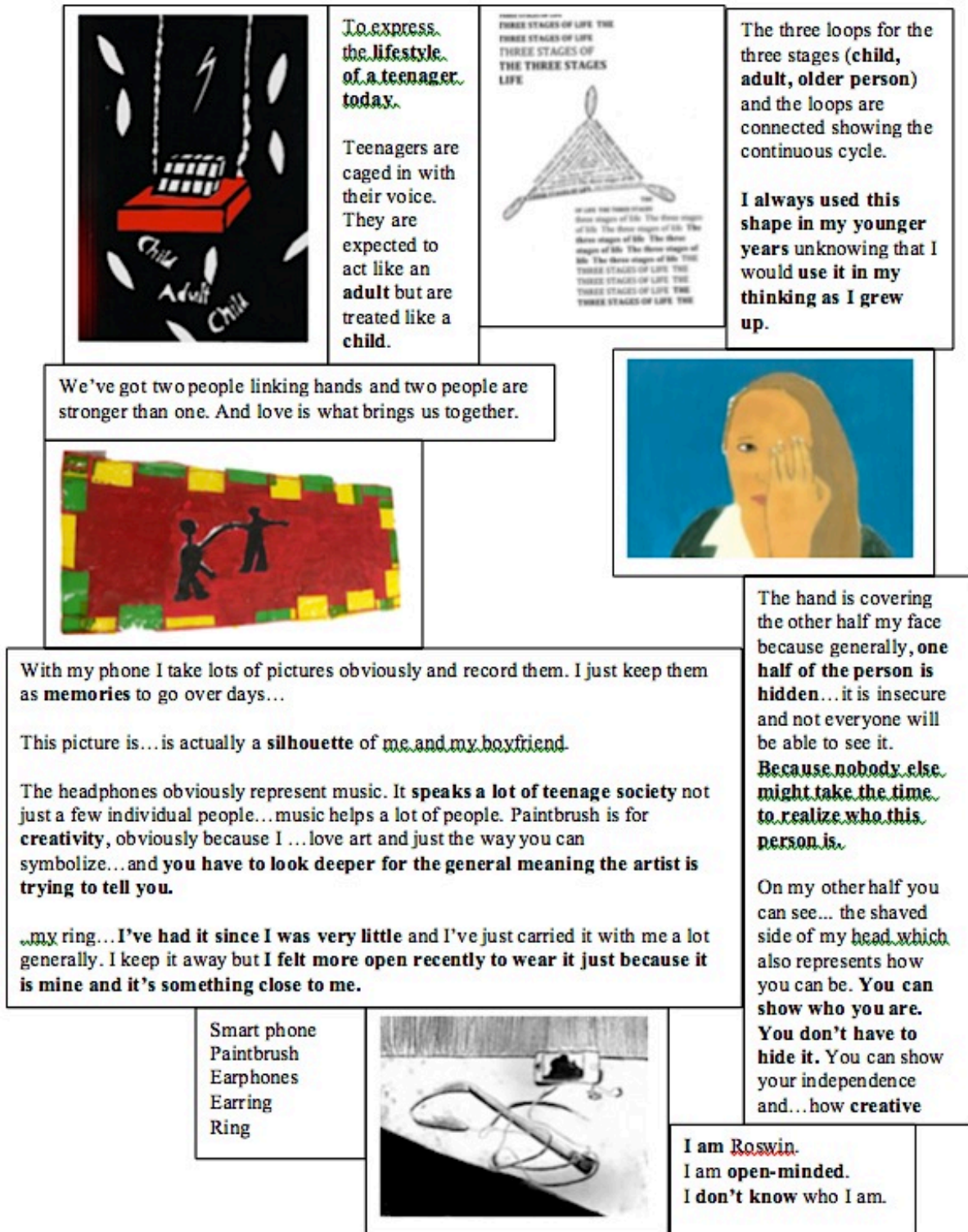


Figure 45 Roswin's Artmaking Journey

Of the four students selected, the mapping of Roswin's artmaking journey (Fig. 45) perhaps carries the most reverberations from the first to the last project. Her initial artwork drew upon a series of visual, textual and social ambiguities that she clearly identified as both personal and shared amongst adolescents generally. Being in that critical phase between childhood and adulthood, the hybrid space of adolescence was a pervasive theme throughout her work.

The hybridity manifested itself as stages, cycles and performances with neither beginnings nor endings but subject to continuous entries as indicated by her use of the words, "child-adult-child" and the loops she used to represent the "three stages of life." As the work progressed, the hybrid was rendered as performance—a trying out of identities and negotiations between acceptable and unacceptable forms of behaviour. For example, the shaved side of her head in the portrait represented "how she [could] be"—indicative of self-agency, governance and more "adult-like" behaviour whilst the other side represented insecurity and conformity.

It is interesting that she stated, "I am Roswin" and "I don't know who I am" with almost the same conviction and further, that the ambiguity carried over into her still life artwork. There, she both reveals and conceals her relationship through the silhouetted imagery on her smart phone. Roswin's reference to the resurfacing of symbols from her past in two distinct artworks also provides an interesting parallel.

With the community project there is less ambiguity but it nonetheless reflects the important theme of relationships that also comes across in her works. The mapping showed that the artmaking provided a useful platform for Roswin to interrogate her personal and social identities.

*Meg's Artmaking Journey*

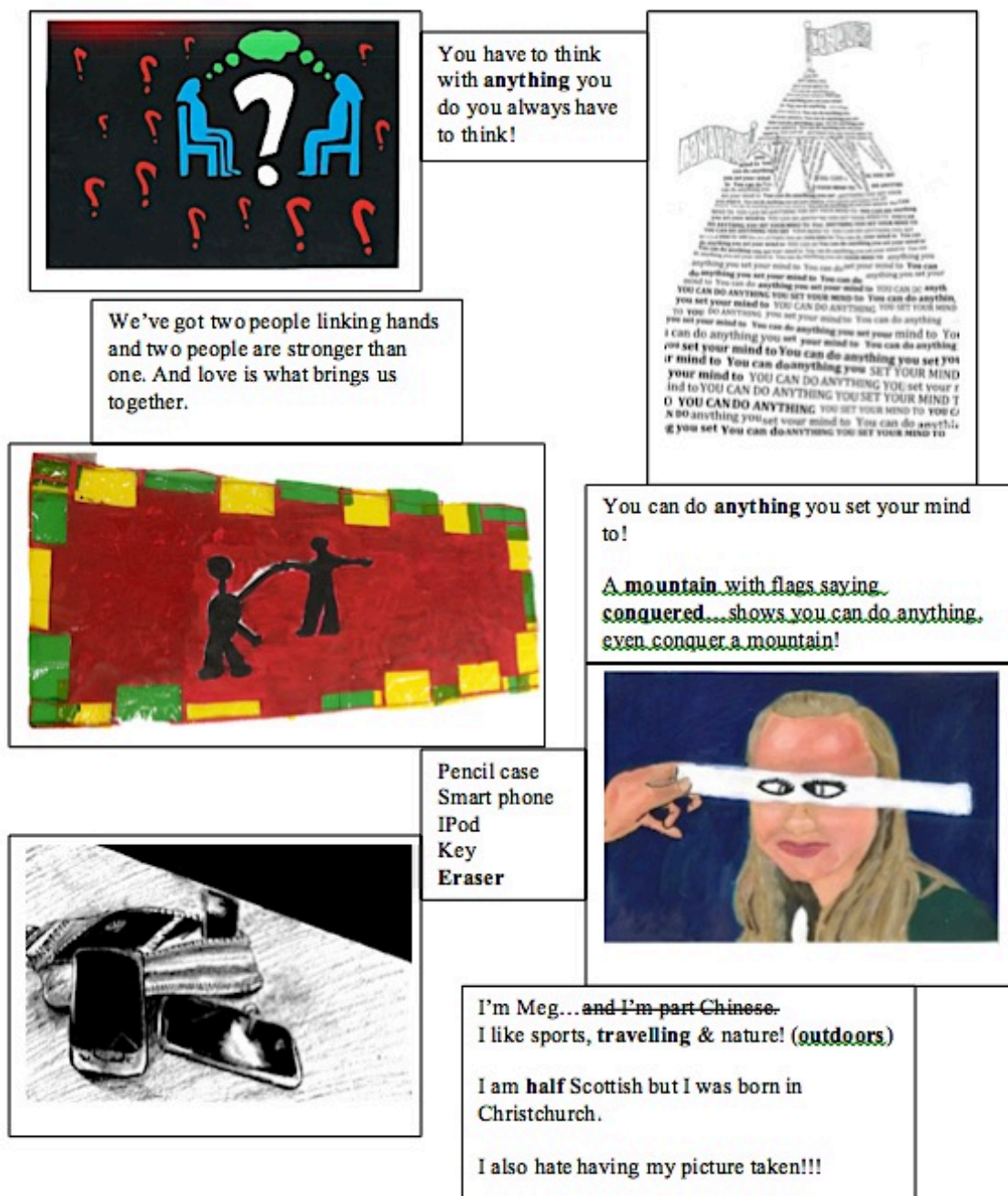


Figure 46 Meg's Artmaking Journey

The mapping of Meg's artmaking journey (Fig. 46) shows less consistent symbolism than Roswin's but there are nonetheless interesting parallels between her artworks. The

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artworks demonstrated interplay between complexity and simplicity. Her first exercise is understood as one of metacognition. It is complex in the way the thinking that is supposedly happening in the work leads to a multiplication of questions rather than answers. It is perhaps representative of the choices that confound adolescents and as such require careful thinking before solutions are found.

The interpretation of her philosophy is more straightforward than the previous and demonstrates optimism about overcoming the very things that probably engendered the confusion witnessed in the first artwork. It is also conceivable that Meg's love for sports and the outdoors generally provides her with both the discipline and sense of adventure required to conquer the "mountains" in her life.

Her self-portrait interestingly co-mingles playfulness with issues of partial disclosure as represented by the ruler with drawn eyes that her friend uses to conceal her eyes. In her description of herself, she wrote that she was part Chinese and then withdrew the statement by crossing it out. Yet she clearly distinguished herself as being half-Scottish. To me, this appeared reminiscent of the way the ruler 'strikes out' aspects of her physical features. Of course, it could also simply relate to the fact that she hates having her picture taken but it nonetheless provides an interesting parallel.

She included a house key and a smart phone amongst her favourite objects in the still life composition and said that they were representative of connections to family and loved ones, respectively. It may be interpreted that relationships provide strong identifiers for Meg, a theme also reinforced in the community project. It is safe to say that artmaking presented Meg with an outlet to begin to track her thinking, supported by the fact that Meg became more open and confident in articulating her ideas.

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### *Hugh's Artmaking Journey*

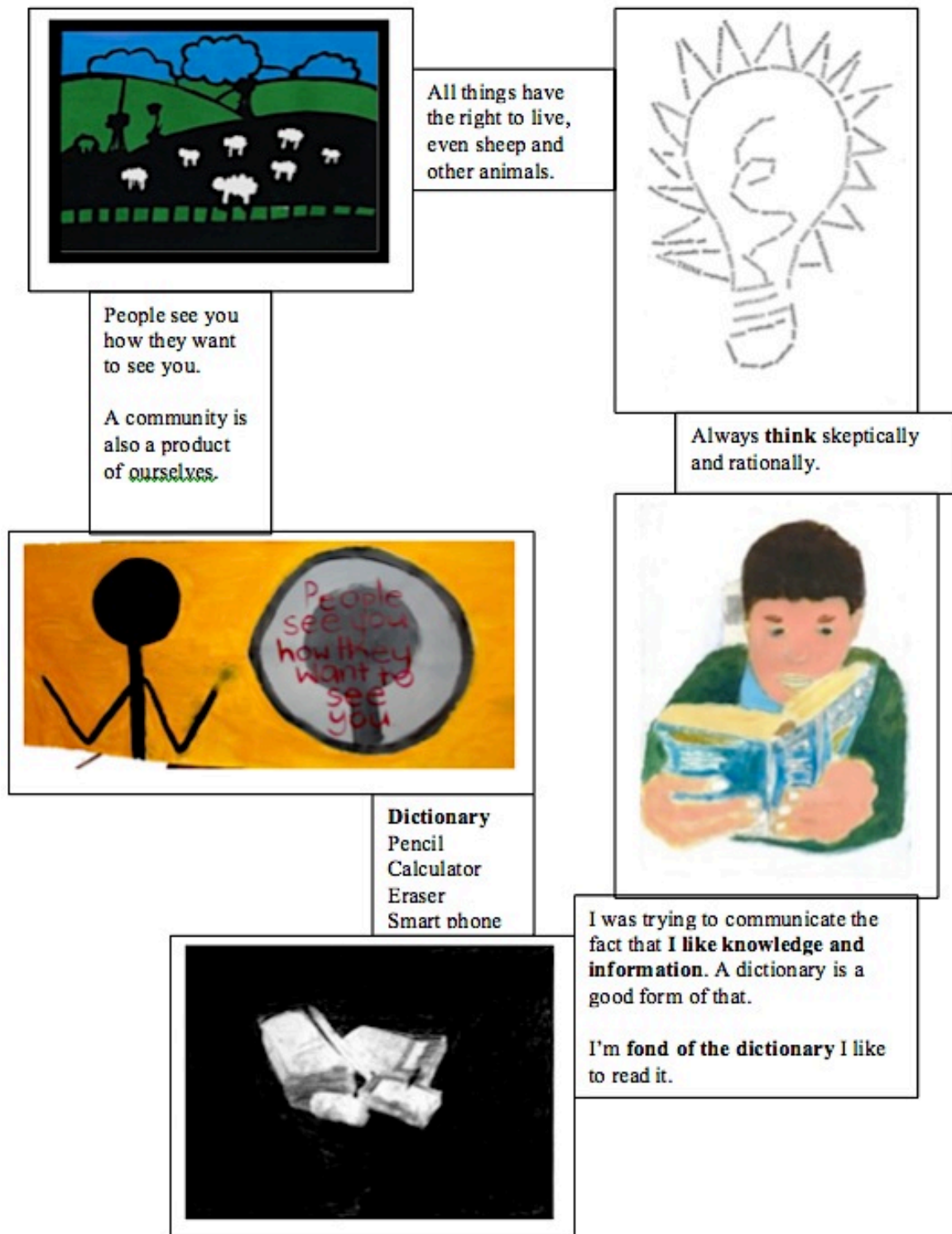


Figure 47 Hugh's Artmaking Journey



Hugh's journey (Fig. 47) was a philosophical one that centred on his love for knowledge. This was a consistent thread that ran throughout his artworks although it was less obvious in the initial project that featured some sheep on a farm and supported by a statement that read, "All things have a right to live, even sheep and cows." It was with the interpretation of his philosophy that he seemed to come into his own. He drew upon the symbolism of a light bulb with a glow around it to represent his belief that one should "Always think skeptically and rationally." As the work progressed it became apparent that knowledge seemed to be an important marker of Hugh's identity. The dictionary soon became the sustained metaphor to express this interest.

Hugh was one of the few students who deliberately included an object in their self-portraits. Not only was the dictionary part of the composition but he was pictured reading it—this was his way of directly showcasing knowledge as one of his prized possessions. The metaphor recurs in the still life drawing amongst his favourite objects. And though he features his smart phone like most of the other members of the class, it wanes in comparison detail-wise amongst the other elements, where the dictionary is arguably the focal point.

The community project that Hugh participated in demonstrates to some degree resonances with the statement that accompanied the first project. They both offer a position regarding everyday experiences and it was at this point that the links between the first work and those that followed became clearer. Whilst the more predictable symbolism was absent in the first project, it may be argued that he was indeed offering a philosophical position in the way he juxtaposed the universal (all things) and the particular (even sheep and cows). Through the mapping of the various projects Hugh became aware of his conceptual choices and as such the artmaking provided a valuable sense-making medium.

*Megha's Artmaking Journey*



Figure 48 Megha's Artmaking Journey

In mapping Megha's journey (Fig. 48), a consistent thread that may be interpreted as a sense of belonging to a greater whole, was noticeable in her artworks and the interpretations that she applied to them. Religion, family and school affiliation surfaced as themes in her



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works and they seemed to provide important identification markers for her. In the initial project she shared that she had drawn a girl that was praying as it was important in her religion. The creation of this work coincided with the month of Ramadan, a special time set aside for Muslims to fast and pray globally. Through this work it may be construed that she was identifying with the Muslim community. The theme recurred in her philosophy project where she also drew upon an important saying from her religion.

Her self-portrait interestingly shows her with a dignified yet piercing gaze that betrayed my initial impression of the withdrawn student that she had shown herself to be in class. I was struck by how conscious she was of the way she was imaged, as it took several retakes before she had found a photograph of herself that she liked. I drew parallels between this and her description of herself as “the eldest child of home,” which no doubt carried that strong presence and sense of responsibility. On the contrary, I was also left to wonder whether the exercise posed a cultural challenge given her culture’s customary values or rebukes of vanity/need for modesty.

Her accompanying descriptions of her native country, Afghanistan and the school she attends made this an artwork that addressed self, place and community simultaneously. The school community marker is again evidenced in the still life composition where she included it amongst her favourite or most meaningful items.

Finally, in the community project, Megha and her peers acknowledged that communities are diverse, and hence conflicts may arise. But like the duck metaphor, community always finds its way around obstacles. The artmaking experience was an important outlet for Megha to assert her identity and have that position validated. Accordingly, the very reserved person I first encountered gradually came into her own, learning to speak up because she had found a place where she felt she belonged.

### Closing the Case



Figure 49 Hybrid (excerpt from my visual journal)

The case began in very unfamiliar terrain. It encompassed a quest to close my eyes to the familiar so that the strange could resonate with me since I was here and the participants were there, culturally. Through our encounters however, the distance was bridged. There were accommodations and contestations, but ultimately, a space opened up where the strange became familiar.

This is depicted in reference to the ‘bubbles’ (which I had introduced as distinct entities earlier) that are now on my head (Fig. 49). It shows that they have impacted me as much as I have impacted them. The former veils, now partially discarded have enabled me to view with some sense of clarity what lay beyond the ‘bubble.’ I carry these emergent understandings at this later moment in time with fewer strings attached. Here and there have met and have contributed hybrid understandings of the research experience.

### **Within-Case analysis**

The preceding examples of the students' individual and collective artmaking experiences have generated a number of themes that present important considerations about the ways that the visual arts are taught and learnt in contemporary classroom contexts. An extended discussion of these themes is presented below in relation to the research focus on how the ways in which the artmaking facilitates the students' negotiations of their senses of self, place and community. The themes were:

1. Hybridity
2. Relationships
3. Identity

### **Hybridity**

Art is a curricular location where multiple ideas of self, place and communities intersect. Accordingly, the concept of hybridity presents a particularly useful frame to tease apart and destabilize the oftentimes universalist (modernist and multicultural) principles that guide visual arts practice, especially at the lower secondary education levels.

Hybridity as a postcolonial concept has been explored by many scholars including Homi Bhabha (1994), Robert Young (1995), and Stuart Hall (1991). It problematizes the "purity" of traditional binaries (Self/Other) within postcolonial societies by reconstituting the space between these essentialist positions as a new form of identity that bears traces of both positions (Johnston & Richardson, 2012).

Hybrid renderings of the artworks and the event of artmaking that produced them in this study were visible in a variety of ways. These were traced through the backgrounds of the participants, the issues they negotiated and the insider-outsider relationships that were navigated throughout.

Conflicts and transitions were some of subthemes generated earlier that make explicit references to hybridity. With regards to conflict it was noted that students through their artwork addressed fragmented notions of self. This was especially apparent in Roswin's claim that she was expected to take on adult responsibilities, but was nonetheless treated as a child or through Peta's assertion that society predetermined identities that teenagers were expected to perform.

The theme of transitions carried physical and philosophical appearances in the study. In physical ways, the participants dwelled on their locations as natives in one place but residents of another. The challenge of this in-between position manifested for example through some of the students' having to transition daily between one language in the home environment and the English language of the school setting, that is emphasized in school.

Megha specifically navigated this issue in the interview project, wherein she interviewed her parent. She expressed her concerns in our email correspondence: "I wanted to ask you about if the person that we are going to interview him/her, don't know English, what should we do??? [emphasis in original]" When I asked whether she could communicate the questions in her native language and translate the results to English, she expressed that this would be an extremely difficult task. Being a member of the dominant English speaking culture, this was something I had unfortunately taken for granted. It calls to mind Bhabha's (1990) contention that "the universalism that paradoxically permits diversity masks ethnocentric norms, values and interests..." (p. 209).

Philosophically, the theme of transitions was supported by the students' acceptances that life is not static but instead has ebbs and flows. In accordance they suggested that one should embrace life's offerings and not become anxious over the things that they cannot control because change is inevitable. And whilst going forward on life's journey, one student offered that the past should be carried with us, perhaps because, "A people without

knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots” (Marcus Garvey, Jamaican Hero). In the examples raised there is evidence of going in-between positions that eventually collapse into each other and open up new hybrid spaces.

### **Relationships**

Relationships have always been a fundamental concern of artmaking. These relationships may be formal, metaphorical, representational, and communal or may manifest as acts of appropriation. Formal relationships govern the ways that the elements and principles of design are organised to make a harmonious whole while metaphorical ones allow for comparison and connection between one thing and another, helping us make sense of our experiences.

Representational relationships apply to the recognizable ways that subjects are depicted in a work of art whereas acts of appropriation relate to the recycling of pre-existing objects or imagery with very little or no transformation applied. Communal relationships on the other hand are human and account for the different capacities that each person brings to the artmaking process to further enrich it. These included peer and student-teacher relationships. All of these relationships were apparent in the artworks from this study.

The theme of relationships has co-appearance in the study since it also featured as one of the subthemes. Family was an important relationship that featured in the student’s art in representational and metaphorical ways. Either way, family was presented as a form of covering that provided important and reliable support throughout the storms of life. Friendships were also significant features of this theme in that they provide a source of belonging and security, and are mutually beneficial for the parties involved.

Other subthemes of stewardship, social justice and technology also came under the banner of relationships. With regard to stewardship, many students seemed to be conscious of

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the interdependence between humans and nature or the environment. In light of this, the messages that came through most of the papercut assignments advocated for the protection of animals or the environment by allowing them to thrive in their natural states without human interference. This message was also endorsed by one of the parents who suggested that youth can play their part in promoting the well being of their communities if they, “*Respect the environment and care for it- don’t litter or tag*” (Interviewee 1).

The theme of stewardship also featured time and life as valuable resources that needed to be effectively managed. The students emphasized the need to make life count by learning from the past, living in the present and keeping hope alive for the future. The theme also endured in the community projects where the students highlighted the need to be their brother/sister’s keeper for the health and well-being of the community.

In a corresponding vein one parent (Interviewee 1) also revealed, “Respect is important- for other people and for property. Help each other out in times of need. I think the earthquakes have drawn the community together.” She went on to state that an important takeaway youth could gain from her experience was, “People matter! In the end ‘stuff’ is only ‘stuff’ – look after each other.” As a complementary argument, another parent (Interviewee 3) advised that, youths should, “Get involved and take ownership then you will get respect from others.”

One of the paths that some of students identified to demonstrate stewardship was through thoughts and actions in support of social justice. In their artworks, this theme was translated through sayings such as “No hate” and “Equality,” making note of the unseen or unnoticed prejudices of everyday life, and advocating respect for diversity and humanity in general.

The final subtheme that supported the overarching theme of relationships was technology. Given the ubiquitous presence of technology and social media in contemporary society, it is no wonder that technology arose as a subtheme in this study. The value that the students ascribed to technological media was especially evidenced in their still life compositions where they were asked to include objects that were meaningful to them. It was rare to find a composition that did not feature a smart phone and the students justified the inclusion of such items as a way to maintain their relationships with families and friends.

In rendering the above relationships visible the students were also mindful of ways to manage the formal relationships (elements and principles of design) in their artworks to successfully communicate their messages. In a complementary manner they learned the art of substituting one symbol for another to evoke metaphorical connections as well as to appropriate symbols such as the ying-yang symbols to provoke meaningful readings of their artwork. Whilst developing their art they also developed valuable relationships amongst their peers and and with me. Thus an environment of trust and confidence in the capacities that each person brought to the experience developed, and served to enlarge our perspectives on life more generally.

### **Identity**

Whilst the scope of the subject of identity spans many areas of study and theoretical thought, and is certainly beyond the scope of this research to undertake fully, there could be no justice to the findings of this limited study without acknowledging the force of identity at work within it. There were numerous instances throughout the study within which students depicted themselves as belonging to a larger, important whole. The various wholes included family, friendship, religious groups, local and national groups, ethnic groups and pop culture. When represented, the family unit always featured as a source of stability in the student's

lives as demonstrated by Nana's statement that, "a family loves all the members and nothing could bring it down."

Similarly, friendships featured as an important ingredient in their definitions of self and community. The category also seemed to offer validation as represented by the statement, "To have someone be nice to you is better than being on your own." And though religious affiliation did not appear with as much frequency as the other themes did, when it surfaced the resonances were strong and consistent.

In addition, most students in their descriptions of themselves highlighted the fact they were from another country or a specific locality in New Zealand. For those who were born in New Zealand to immigrant parents they deemed their dual citizenship a necessary part of the way they mapped their identities. Resonances of this translated as symbolism associated with particular countries, and with instances where Chinese and Korean languages had prominent positions in their artworks. One student went as far as to process her ideas for her sketch in her native language.

There were nonetheless instances when student identity seemed fragile. For example, in the early, philosophy-based work, it appeared that the student might be trying to reinforce confidence in herself. This may have also been the reason for the reticence on the part of students to share their ethnic heritage, as in the case of the Māori student. Maybe that was his way of avoiding categorization and essentialization. Otherwise, given the deficit theorizing and stigma that has historically been inflicted upon Māori students (Manning, 2008), perhaps he would rather just blend in with his peers who were indistinguishable from him in their physical features (blonde hair, green eyes). In other instances identity simply featured as a complex phenomenon in a constant state of flux, as mentioned earlier under the theme of hybridity.



The section that follows brings the case to a close. It considers the extent to which the students recognized, critically analysed and interpreted their senses of self, place and community and the implications the findings present for artmaking at the lower levels of the secondary education system.

### **Conclusion**

#### **Negotiations of Self, Place and Community**

Eyles (1989) posits:

Everyday life is... a taken-for-granted reality which provides the unquestioned background of meaning for the individual. It is a social construction which becomes a structure itself. Thus through our actions in everyday life we build, maintain and reconstruct the very definition.... We both create and are created by society and these processes are played out within the context of everyday life.... From it we derive a sense of self, identity, as living a real and meaningful biography (in Ellis, 2005, p. 62).

Given that art is mandatory for the students who were involved in this study and further, that they alternate between two and three hours of it per week, it is arguable that art constituted a significant part of these students' "everyday lives." There were many examples to support the participants' recognition and interpretation of their senses of self, place and community. These have been discussed in the preceding sections.

However, further work was necessary in the area of critical analysis. Though some of the students demonstrated this capacity well, a few students required further orientation in this area, particularly since they held the view that artmaking did not need to extend to an engagement with ideas, as stated in their reflections at the end of the project. This was also encumbered by the time factor. The reality of art teaching is that it is always a challenge to

balance the time spent between helping participants hone their technical and conceptual skills.

Obstacles to efforts to engage the students in critical analysis were further exacerbated by interruptions to timetable scheduling to accommodate other activities within the school. The most significant of these was the school's designation of the day for the culminating activity as a free period to participate in the event, "Activity Day." I was not forewarned of this and as a result the students' final works did not represent their levels of competence.

Nonetheless, this specific setback provided a valuable lesson for this study. The students, in the face of this challenge, demonstrated more agency than I would have anticipated, as they organized themselves as a community to undertake the tasks within the limited timeframe that was allotted to class on that day. In addition, some of them took the onus to remain in class as they deemed it more gratifying to complete their artworks than to enjoy the free period that they were awarded by the school.

The events of that day still resonate with me. They led me to believe that the art classroom gave them a locus—a center that supported and valued their gifts and individual contributions and in return they endowed it with value (Tuan, 1977). The nature of the day-to-day routines promoted a sense of community for them that transcended the varied art projects through which we explored community as a theme.

When analyzed at its most basic level, the experience reveals cognizance of the fact that the environment communicates volumes about how students are viewed and what they may aspire toward (Cohen & Trostle, 1990). This manifested through the opportunities provided to the students to exercise autonomy and to develop confidence regarding the value of their input. In a complementary way, though the activities were structured, the emphasis on sense-making over a single right answer helped to promote the individual student's appreciation for inquiry and the confidence to also carry out inquiry with others.

### **Implications for Artmaking at the Lower Secondary Levels**

Whilst this case is site specific and therefore its results are not generalizable, there nonetheless are implications that may help to strengthen the teaching and learning of visual arts at the lower secondary education levels. Through establishing healthy relationships with the students in this study, where students understood that their contributions were valued, a sense of community was fostered within the class.

In the cases of students who were extremely reserved and who became more expressive visually and orally toward the end of the class, it might be interpreted that the strong sense of community that was developed also supported student's positive self-concepts. These in turn engender a valuing of the place of the art classroom, as indicated by the students' voluntary decisions to remain behind on the last day to complete their art projects.

These situations have led me to believe that an emphasis on student-centered approaches that are structured, yet open-ended in design, also facilitates a space for students to exercise their judgments responsibly and negotiate their interests. Transforming the art classroom into a safe space where potentially 'unsafe' ideas may be discussed therefore helps students to come into their own as individuals but also to recognize their responsibility toward honoring others' perspectives.

Finally, by promoting relational encounters between the student's artworks, their lifeworlds and the work of contemporary artists, they begin to understand that art does not operate in a vacuum but instead address important universal concerns. When opportunities are created for entries from students' personal and cultural lives, the ways in which they experience the world and makes sense of it become legitimated. In turn, students will be even more inclined to be open to the artmaking process, as indicated by Roswin's comment that

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“it’s been a really enjoyable time and Ms. Barrett has teached (sic) me to look at things differently than how I would have usually looked at them.” This is further supported by the fact that she had become more invested in art toward the end of the project.

The within-case descriptions and analysis of the Christchurch case study were presented in this chapter. Chapter 5 will describe the Kingston case study and similarly will present an accompanying within-case analysis of the findings.

## Chapter Five

### Re-Marking a Tertiary Institution in Kingston

*We are interested in... becoming pedagogical (Irwin, 2013)*



Figure 50 Improvisation Artwork (Teacher-trainees, Kingston Case Study)

### Introduction

Walker (2004a) highlighted the elusiveness of the artmaking process for art teachers due to its emergent and open-ended nature. Like Schön (1996a), she deduced that the critical issue that centers this dilemma is not “what the students learn, or their difficulties, but how the teachers have their own understandings of the material at hand” (*in* Walker 2004a, p. 6). This dilemma often begins with disparities between theories and the actual practice of art education, where a neat fit is not easily found. In these postmodern times where multiple approaches are recognized as being equally valid, these concerns are further exacerbated.

Given this quandary, art educators, art theorists and organizations have emphasized the value of designing art projects from an aesthetic position, rather than relying wholly on an intellectual one (UIC Spiral Art Education). Greene (2001) advocates that an aesthetic

position that nurtures the learner's capacity to "notice what there is to be noticed" beyond cognitive forms of knowing. The artworks above (Fig. 50) represent some 'noticings' by a group of teacher-trainees in response to an improvisatory artmaking experience with specific parameters that invited their intuitive, perceptual, imaginative, cultural, and aesthetic responses.

Similar to the ways that the trainees brought their unique experiences and perspectives to engage with the art form meaningfully, this chapter focuses on the dynamics of the research encounter that enabled the participants to 'attend' to the qualities of the experience. It describes and analyzes the results of an intensive visual arts education workshop undertaken with a mixed group of teacher-trainees and teachers at a tertiary institution in Kingston, Jamaica over a two-week period. Broadly defined, the workshops were aimed at facilitating artmaking conditions that allowed the participants to negotiate their senses of self, place and community, similar to the focus of the Christchurch Case Study presented in Chapter Four.

The emphasis of the workshop revolved around teacher-trainees/teachers' learning through an aesthetic lens and responding aesthetically in order to become more attuned to what happens in the space between art teaching and art learning. The research project structure would serve to support teacher-trainee understanding of the dynamics at the heart of the event of artmaking. The experience was equally designed to provoke sensitivity to the ways that artmaking may elicit meaningful participation on the part of students. Through the participants' personal experiences of negotiating their own senses of self, place, and community in the project, they would be better equipped to help their students navigate similar paths.

The chapter is divided into two parts. Part One sets the contextual dimension of the case study. It describes the experience in detail and analyzes its findings and offers an

extended discussion that complements these findings. In Part Two, I examine the impact that the study had on the teacher-trainees and further, how the case broadly constitutes a re-mark on the ways that the teaching of artmaking at the secondary level may be conceptualized.

Consistent with the structure of Chapter Four, this chapter also reflects the nature of the facilitated artmaking processes it describes. This potential is performed through the a/r/tographic reading that the juxtaposition of art and text invites. Accordingly, my visual notes intermittently appear throughout the chapter in addition to the artworks created by the participants. The former consists of imagery extracted from my visual journal, which I have created or adapted. They are accompanied by descriptions that aim to supplement their meanings and illustrate the reflexive stance I bring to the encounter. The first of these follows.

### Opening the Case



Figure 51 Insider/Outsider (Excerpt from Visual Journal)

“Becoming pedagogical,” as described by Irwin (2013), is an a/r/tographic dimension that relates to a state wherein “teacher candidates move from desiring to ‘be’ a teacher as expert to ‘becoming’ a teacher as inquirer” (p. 203). In addition, it promotes a shift in consciousness for the teacher who is also an artist, and must reconcile the theory and practice held within both roles. This position enables teachers to become more attuned to the presumed and dynamic spaces of classroom life.

Fig. 51 above frames my interest in assuming a pedagogical role in this research endeavour. It represents how my artist-researcher-teacher roles are implicated in the inquiry, providing different vantage points for engagement. By virtue of the fact that I was familiar with the research site, I functioned as both an insider and outsider to the research, as indicated by the partially open window that both provides a clear view, but also implies a containment of that view. The identically coloured background represents the internal and external spaces negotiated and the complexities of sliding between the ‘expert’ and ‘inquirer’ stances within the research continuum.



### Part One: Framing the Research

#### **Description of the Case**

The research site has been described previously in Chapter Three but is introduced in this segment to highlight the history of re-marks that it constitutes. These re-marks are presented as journeys, and what follows is aimed at briefly mapping these, actually and metaphorically. The first relates to the site's initial designation as part of lands where the British Army was headquartered prior to Jamaica's independence in 1962. Post-independence these lands became the headquarters of the Jamaica Defence Force. Eventually, this site and other premises were repurposed to meet other national needs.

The second journey represents the acquisition of the property to house Arthur's College, an institution itself bearing a number of re-marks. The institution began with evening classes that evolved into a formal school, with a singular, specialized focus, and it eventually became a College, resulting from an amalgamation of several specialized schools. The journey also captures the re-purposing of a house (presumably belonging to one of the officers), that remained as tangible evidence of the history of the site. This building served as the administrative block for the different schools, and it was eventually destroyed by fire, forcing the relocation of its offices to other quarters on the campus.

Like the inter- and intra-locational shifts referenced in the second journey, the third journey specifically highlights the shifts that the art education department has endured. It has grown from a small department to a relatively sizeable one with degree program offerings. The increase in enrolments is both attributable to the quality of the program and the Education Ministry's mandate for all teachers to be qualified with at least a Bachelor's degree, part of reform efforts aimed at enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in schools. The art department's role in this vision is to bridge theory with practice, and the

world of the institution with the wider community, promoting rigour in the development of knowledge and to preparing its teacher candidates to be culturally responsive agents of change.

Toward this end, this case study represents a fourth journey. Teacher-trainees/teachers in the art education program would engage in experiences designed to illuminate the parallels between art teaching and artmaking. This would serve to facilitate their development as pedagogical inquirers, who engage in art teaching with the understanding and sensory awareness needed to develop transformative arts experiences that enable their students to negotiate their senses of self, place and community through the artmaking process.

### **Descriptions of the Participants**

Whilst Chapter Three provides a detailed background of the participants, the poem that follows expresses participant descriptions of themselves at the time of our initial encounter. Most of the content is their original words, restructured for cohesiveness.

I chose art education.  
I learned to read through art, you see,  
And have been fairly proficient at art since my high school days.  
I then reluctantly took on art teaching and fell in love with it  
And it has been 25 years since.  
So I didn't only do the choosing,  
'Cause art education also chose me.

I chose art education.  
It's been some time in the making,  
'Cause I used to fill in when my art teacher was not available,  
And he recognised this strength and built on it, you see.  
This therefore inspired me to pursue a teaching degree.

## Re-MARKING PLACES

I chose art education.  
Cause as an artist this was an avenue  
Where a sustained income was guaranteed.  
But I was also dissatisfied with the system,  
And so I desire to be a change agent,  
To address the lack I witnessed in the field.

I chose art education.  
Because I excelled in art throughout high school.  
And through observing my art teacher,  
I saw a glimpse of what I could be.  
I want to be a change agent  
Changing students' lives, changing the future  
By facilitating creativity.

I chose art education.  
'Cause I am a dramatic person who enjoys communicating with other people.  
And because the prospect of getting a job through this field  
Whilst being exposed to bits and pieces of art offers more feasibility.  
I chose art education to share my artistic abilities.

I chose this art workshop  
Out of curiosity.  
I want to learn new skills and acquire information  
That will prepare me for my practicum experience.

I chose to be a participant  
'Cause I am new to the field.  
And as such I saw this as an opportunity  
To experience and learn about new artmaking strategies.

I chose this art workshop  
Even though I've practiced as an art teacher.  
I am here to acquire different strategies to engage my students meaningfully  
And sharpen my capacity to promote group dynamics.

I chose this art workshop  
Because I'm always desirous  
Of 'being in the know'  
And just like I chose this art workshop,  
I chose art education and it also chose me.

In assembling the poem, I picked up on notions of ambivalence between passion and necessity. The reality in Jamaica is that most artists end up teaching, because the economy does not support making a living wholly from the sale of art products. Certainly, there are exceptions to the rule, but these artists usually have strong familial economic support, or come from families with established reputations in the field and enduring clientele.

Consequently, though all the teacher-trainees/teachers professed their impassioned commitment to the arts, some embarked on the education journey with a bit of reluctance, regarding it as a necessary means for their financial and artistic 'survival.' However, as demonstrated in the poem, this reluctance was often transformed into other, more positive responses. It is interesting to note that many of the examples implicated the art teacher in their motivation for choosing the field. This was both in the positive sense of replicating the effect their teacher had on them and, conversely, to counter their dissatisfaction with their former art experiences. In addition, many recognized the potency of the arts as a catalyst for change, and consequently wanted to align themselves with efforts to promote change through the arts.

The role that the participants' high school experiences played in motivating them to become art teachers also provides an important parallel to the Christchurch case study, as it affirms that meaningful engagement with the arts at the lower secondary level promotes sustained interest and participation in the arts.

## Project I: Culturally-Responsive Teaching and Place-based Education

In response to the teacher-trainees/teachers' reaching out for meanings, the research project employed qualities of instruction and curriculum that fulfilled the characteristics of culturally responsive pedagogy. The work that the teacher-trainees/teachers undertook broke with the conventional modernist vein of art curriculum at the lower secondary level, in many schools, to capitalize on what Delpit (1995) terms "the brilliance students bring with them 'in their blood'" (Stanley & Greenwood, 2013, pp. 52-53). This route was an investigative one that built on Walker's (2001) model (Fig. 52), presenting artmaking as engagement with meaning making. Place and community were incorporated as well, to facilitate entry into and between the teacher-trainees' personal and cultural lives.

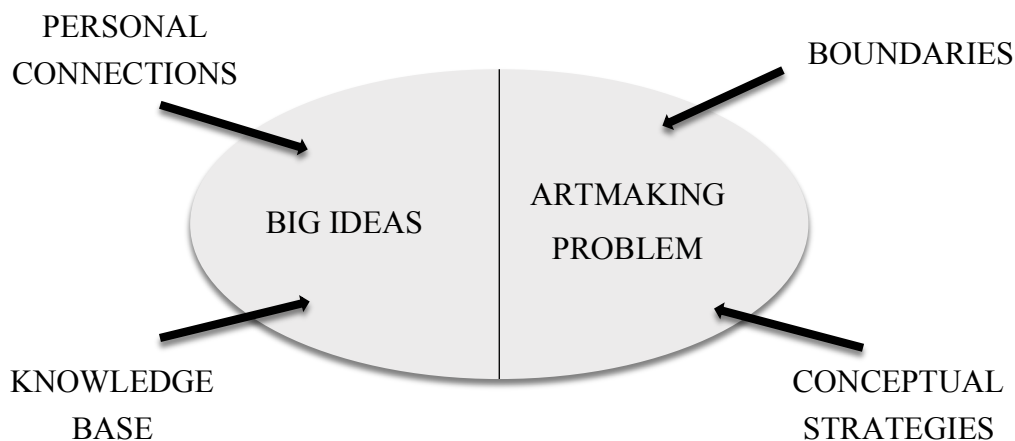


Figure 52 The Artmaking Process (Walker, 2004a)

The first entry into the teacher-trainees' cultural lives was through the route of dramatization. The exercise was deliberately structured with a performance-based orientation to build on the trainees' natural acting capacities and to engender a space where wonderment and sense making were valued over certainty. Notwithstanding their natural inclination toward acting, these teacher-trainees were far more accomplished in working within the conceptual frames of the visual arts setting. This experience was intentionally chosen to

promote a sense of disequilibrium that would facilitate their development of new conceptual frameworks, outside of the visual ones with which they were familiar.

The dramatization experience was contextualized by two theoretical perspectives: Culturally Responsive Teaching and Place-Based Education. Both perspectives are grounded in a desire to facilitate authentic engagement with the curriculum, and the teacher-trainees would require a working knowledge of the positions they offer as a precursor to the events that followed. Efforts at promoting cultural sensitivity have often translated to essentialist notions of culture such as the tourist curriculum that Stanley (2014) critiques. As such, it was important to establish the fact that culturally responsive pedagogy involves more than merely being aware of other cultures. Rather, it considers the extent to which multiple voices or cultures are implicated in the construction of knowledge (Acuff, Hirak, & Nangah, (2014). Ballengee Morris, Ambush & Daniel (2012) concur,

Culturally responsive teaching is informed by and responsive to students' cultural experiences. These experiences are viewed as assets that give guidance to the creation of transformative curriculum design (p. 4).

Further insights into the characteristics and parameters of this perspective were provided through the information captured in Table 3 below. This offered a platform to engage the participants in conversations aimed at teasing out the points as presented and to supplement them with examples from either their own practices or others' practices where parallels with the characteristics were evidenced.

Table 3 Characteristics of Culturally Responsive Teaching

<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING</b>	
<b>VALIDATING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teaches respect and builds on factual understanding of a student's and their classmates' heritages.</li> <li>- Provides multiple entry points for learners to engage with information.</li> </ul>
<b>COMPREHENSIVE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promotes holistic teaching.</li> <li>- Creates an environment wherein students demonstrate responsibility for their own learning and that of others.</li> </ul>
<b>MULTIDIMENSIONAL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Draws upon different subject disciplines to investigate larger themes or ideas.</li> <li>- Creates conditions that make the curriculum ethnically diverse.</li> </ul>
<b>EMPOWERING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Secures positive experiences for minority students within school to build their self-confidence and support their academic and social success.</li> </ul>
<b>TRANSFORMATIVE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Resists hegemonic practices in traditional education</li> <li>- Promotes students' social consciousness of oppressive and exploitive behaviours and practices.</li> </ul>
<b>EMANCIPATORY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dispels mainstream misconceptions of ethnic cultures.</li> <li>- Fosters the development of critical skills to equip students to analyze, question, and actively take charge their own learning.</li> </ul>

The participants acknowledged that most students regard art to be what they have been exposed to in the textbooks, which scarcely reference local artists or culture. The teacher-trainees also shared their sense of responsibility in countering this misconception. In a corresponding way, they recognized the importance of tensions between making 'meaningful art' and their responsibility to facilitate skill acquisition. The limitations of the one hour per week visual arts classes were also discussed, relating to the time required for students to become fully engaged in artmaking that was also meaning making.

Leading out of these discussions, the overarching concerns of Place-based Education were introduced and framed as education that values and gives precedence to the located aspects of learning. The introduction to this perspective was substantiated on the grounds that "nothing we do is unplaced" (Gruenewald, 2003b, p. 622) and therefore place has always been and continues to be fundamental to our understandings of human experience. In concert,

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I noted that this study inquires into the ways in which the art classroom and other places are “ingredient in” the ways that students make sense of the world (Ellis, 2005).

According to Sobel (2004), place-based education asks questions such as: “Where am I? What is the nature of the place? What sustains this community” (p. iii). Put another way, Klein (2000) purports that a reading of place necessitates “coming to understand what is happening there, what has happened, what is happening, and what might happen” (Carpenter, 2003, p. 14). These questions provided useful frames to center this interest in the ways that places shape our worldviews. Sobel’s (2004) elaboration on these concerns offered further clarity about this perspective. He posits that place-based education,

Employs a process of re-storying, [whereby] students are asked to respond creatively to stories of their homeworld so that, in time, they are able to position themselves, imaginatively and actually, within the continuum of nature and culture in that place. They become part of the community, rather than a passive observer of it (Sobel, 2004, p.iii).

Place-based education is distinguished from other forms of education by characteristics contained in Table 4 below. In response to this information, the participants and I discussed scenarios that illustrated a place-based orientation. Field trips came up in the discussions as one of the closest local associations to the concept that the participants could identify as being congruent with educational undertakings at the lower secondary levels. At the upper secondary levels however, I pointed to the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate<sup>18</sup> (CSEC) curriculum as another form of the exploration of the concept. A component of it requires students to visit artist studios and conduct interviews about their practices.

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<sup>18</sup> The Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate examinations undertaken by students who have reached the 16+ age of secondary level education as well as postsecondary candidates in the Caribbean region. It certifies candidates for advancement to tertiary level education and determines their competencies for entering professional fields of work.



Table 4 Characteristics of Place-Based Education

<b>CHARACTERISTICS OF PLACE-BASED EDUCATION</b>	
PLACE-ORIENTED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Makes use of the local community</li> <li>- Legitimizes the histories that constitute a place</li> </ul>
COLLABORATIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Connects students with resource persons within the community</li> <li>- Creates opportunities for immersion into community life</li> </ul>
MULTIDIMENSIONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Has a multidisciplinary focus</li> </ul>
EMPOWERING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promotes a sense of belonging</li> <li>- Centers learning around the interests of the students</li> <li>- Encourages students to create knowledge rather than to passively absorb it</li> <li>- Facilitates students' development as "brokers" of community resources</li> </ul>
TRANSFORMATIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engages with real-world problem solving</li> <li>- Fosters students' appreciation, respect and care for the natural world</li> </ul>
SUSTAINABLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nurtures students' capacities to be active contributors and advocates for the well-being of their communities</li> </ul>

Armed with this knowledge, the teacher-trainees/teachers then contemplated the ways in which the characteristics of these two perspectives were complementary, and identified the areas where they overlapped (see Fig. 53). They identified three main areas/themes: diversity, relationships, and empowerment, and assigned them to this new and emergent space. Across both perspectives, they identified the necessity of responding to the diverse needs of the students and the community. They particularly distinguished effective and positive working relationships wherein participants perceive themselves as contributing members, as the key to successful implementation of a culturally responsive, place-based learning environment.

They then took on the task of unpacking the meanings of these concepts through embodied forms of inquiry that engaged affect, the various senses, and physical exploration. It was the dramatization activity referenced earlier that marked the first entry into the teacher-trainees' cultural lives.

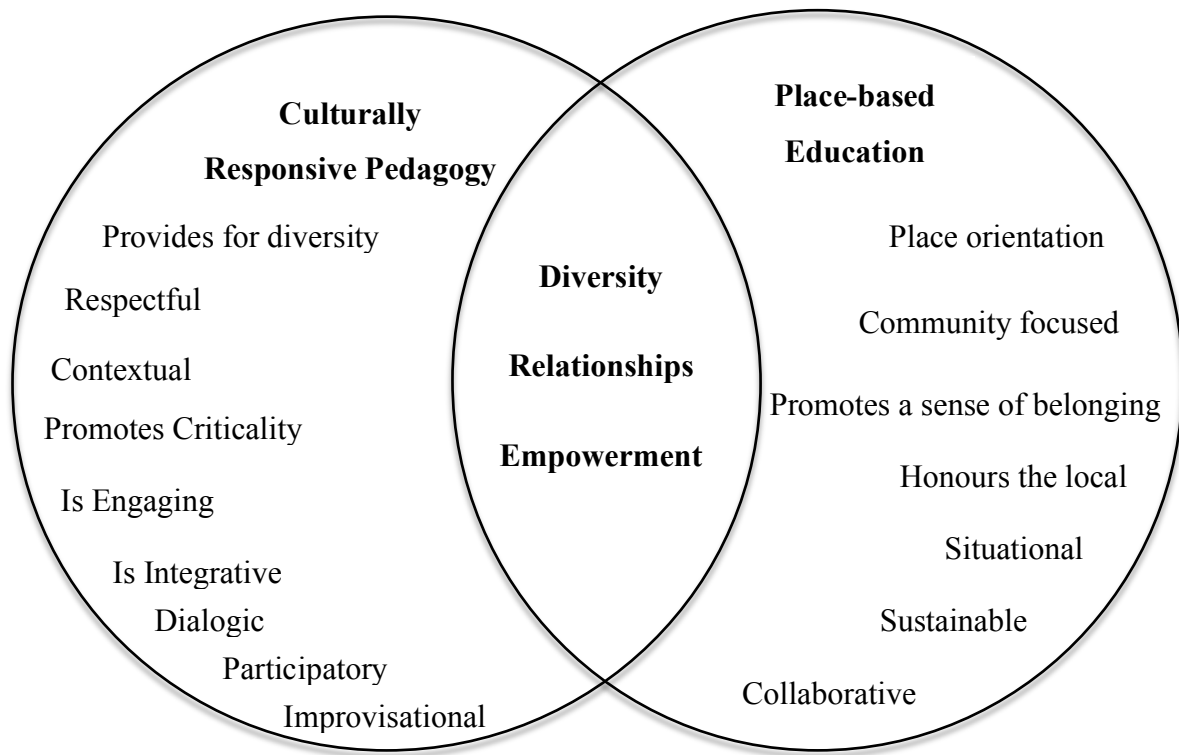


Figure 53 Overlap Between Culturally Responsive Teaching and Place-Based Education

### Dramatization without Words

The teacher-trainees/teachers formed three groups. Each group took turns illustrating one of the aforementioned concepts through the medium of drama (see Fig. 53)<sup>19</sup>. The defined artmaking boundary required that speech be totally restricted for this activity. This limitation was applied to illuminate the overdependence on language-based systems, to highlight what is valued as knowledge and, to challenge the participants to engage with other forms of knowing through aesthetics.

The application of the boundary in this context supported Walker's (2001) argument that boundaries "set necessary limits that enable artists to work productively" (p. 73), and creatively. In concert, the restriction of speech prompted the trainees to make more purposeful and conceptual aesthetic decisions that went beyond clichés. Likewise, when

<sup>19</sup> To preserve the anonymity of the participants a filter has been applied to this image and others of this nature in the chapter.

participants were in the role of audience members, they were compelled to be attentive, utilizing relational literacies in order to make sense of the experience.



Figure 54 Dramatization on Empowerment (Group 1)

The scenario above (54) was based on the concept of empowerment. In the dramatization, the central character showed signs of being distraught and disempowered by pacing the floor with a confused look on her face, eventually withdrawing to a corner in a fetal position. The other two characters ran to her aid and tried to console her, though she resisted initially. However, she eventually arose and they placed a cloak on her as if they were offering protection of some sort. This was later placed on her head in the form of a “cape.” The supporting characters stood by her side but offered some distance, only holding on to the ends of the cape. Her facial expression had completely transformed then, and with raised fists she punched the air.

The dramatization and the subsequent interpretations provided by the larger group provided a range of perspectives. Importantly, the medium allowed for personal and cultural entries from the trainees. It allowed them to make choices that brought the specificity of their own thoughts feelings, and experiences to the fore (Grumet, 2004 in Stanley & Greenwood,

2013, p. 53). The participants enjoyed the activity, and commented that it presented a useful introductory strategy to “evoke interest and stimulation,” to garner “active participation,” and to “encourage students to express themselves.” Lisa concurred,

As an art educator in training the activities today gave me a good perspective on how to approach my lessons, in terms of strategies. The introductory activity was an effective way of breaking the ice in the classroom to allow all of us to participate, get our attention and create understanding using a simple technique, leaving me to wonder, what is next? I am used to the words ‘big idea,’ being that our art creation is based on a theme, but I never really thought about using just the theme as an activity. Instead, my emphasis would be on procedures when creating my lesson. Using an activity that is connected to another discipline sparked my interest. Being that we are all visual students, we do not get many opportunities to express ourselves dramatically. The use of miming was a very interesting way of using our bodies to communicate a message or a theme. Working in a group allowed me to interact with my peers, share our ideas, and actively participate in learning. This lesson covered the different domains of learning: the cognitive, psychomotor and the affective domains. As such, I expressed myself in different ways and at no time did I feel bored.

The head of department who observed the session shared similar sentiments. She said:

The highlight of the day’s activity was the students’ dramatizing the themes/enduring ideas which were reinforced in the ensuing discussion about developing pedagogies of place. This exercise proved to be a precursor to complexities introduced and addressed in a following session.

### **Artmaking Centered on Big Ideas**

As the session progressed, the artmaking problem was incrementally problematized to generate new insights and to provoke further questions from the participants. In concert, we

viewed a brief video of an American artist, Kara Walker, who is known for her room-sized tableaux of black and white cut paper silhouettes. Her works incite critiques of racial and gender tensions in America. The purpose of introducing the video was to help the teacher-trainees/teachers to make relevant connections between the creative processes of contemporary artists and their own pedagogical undertakings. Kara was also referenced for the parallels between her medium of cut-paper silhouettes and the medium of papercuts that the participants would soon explore.

Kara, like many contemporary artists, uses “big ideas” to ground their creative pursuits. Big ideas, according to Walker (2001) are “broad important human issues...characterized by complexity, ambiguity, contradiction and multiplicity” (p. 1). Consequently, their use engenders critical thinking and facilitates connections between personal and universal concerns. Through grounding student artmaking in big ideas, Walker (2001) suggests that their processes will bypass superficiality and be more meaningful for them.

Guided by this premise, the trainees deconstructed the concepts or big ideas of diversity, relationships, and empowerment. They also considered Kara’s Jamaican contemporaries—either through the ways they address similar themes or by virtue of similarities in their use of art media. They also contemplated the relevance of her work to artmaking at the lower secondary levels.

While the trainees were familiar with the use of big ideas in their own lesson planning, following the approach of the art education department, the extent to which this was the case varied with the different cohort groups. (Cohorts in this instance are categorized by their number of years in the art education degree-training program.) Given this variability, and in order to reinforce or clarify trainee understanding, the characteristics of big ideas and examples were provided, as well as their relevance to the study of a work of art.

Since big ideas provide an umbrella or conceptual frame for examining issues, they require dissection to be fully utilized. The big ideas were therefore broken down into key concepts (also principles espoused by Walker, 2001), providing parameters to guide trainee work and to engender a range of perspectives. The following suggestions were offered:

- Think about what the big idea implies.
- Consider a range of personal and cultural perspectives on the big idea.
- Create a list of ten key concepts.
- Narrow the choice of key concepts to the three that best problematizes the big idea.

Following this process, the trainees worked with the themes/big ideas of diversity, relationships and empowerment. They selected three key concepts to focus their artmaking, and chose metaphorical associations for those concepts. Based on the selected metaphors they developed visual symbols that were then combined to create a papercut design based on the big idea.

Papercuts in this context carry the same rationale as in Chapter 4—to provide a platform for the participants to address issues that hold both personal and cultural significance for them. The medium has the capacity to reconcile simplicity and directness in one platform and is a versatile media that accommodates the transitory nature of the workshops. There are two examples that follow (see Figs. 55 and 56) that illustrate in their own words, how the trainees approached the big ideas of diversity and relationships. The papercuts have been included below to facilitate relational readings between the ideas and their visual interpretations.

**BIG IDEA: Diversity**

Key Concepts:

- Diversity is about unlike characteristics
- Diversity adds variety to our culture
- Diversity is contextual

Metaphors:

- Diversity is a plant
- Diversity is a range of shapes
- Diversity represents roads



Papercut Design Diversity,  
Lisa

Figure 55 Lisa's Exploration of the Big Idea of Diversity

Lisa's understanding of diversity centers on differences serving to enhance the whole. As is true of a plant, she recognizes that diversity has the potential to grow. She also recognizes that nurturance is necessary for its full potential to be realized. She has expressed these ideas with one 'plant' that yields different "fruits," as represented by the different shapes, and possesses different roads or paths, as indicated by the multicoloured roots that spread out beneath it.

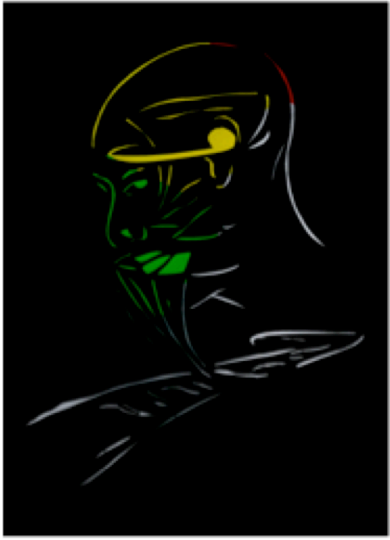
<p><b>BIG IDEA: Relationships</b></p> <p>Key Concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Relationships are about friendships</li><li>- Relationships can change at any time.</li><li>- Relationships may bring pain.</li></ul> <p>Metaphors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Relationships are steps</li><li>- Relationships are rivers</li><li>- Relationships are whirlwinds.</li></ul>	 <p>Papercut Design: Relationships George</p>
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Figure 56 George's Exploration of the Big Idea of Relationships

George's exploration (Fig. 55) highlights the fragile nature of relationships and the associated tensions that define them. His key concepts and metaphors reference his personal concerns and fears about feelings that are not reciprocated. Hence, he has likened them to steps that take one both up and down. He also likens relationships to rivers, which flow if the channels are kept clear but contribute to whirlwind-like situations of unease when that flow is interrupted. George has depicted x-ray-like features of the character in his papercut to describe these sentiments and sensations.

### **Project II: Papercuts as bridges between personal interests and the curriculum**

The big ideas of diversity, relationships, and empowerment center the papercut project. These enduring ideas serve to enable further abstraction and conceptualization in trainee artwork, and to present different openings for their entry into the activities in personal and cultural ways. Additional examples of individual visual interpretations of the exercise may be viewed below:



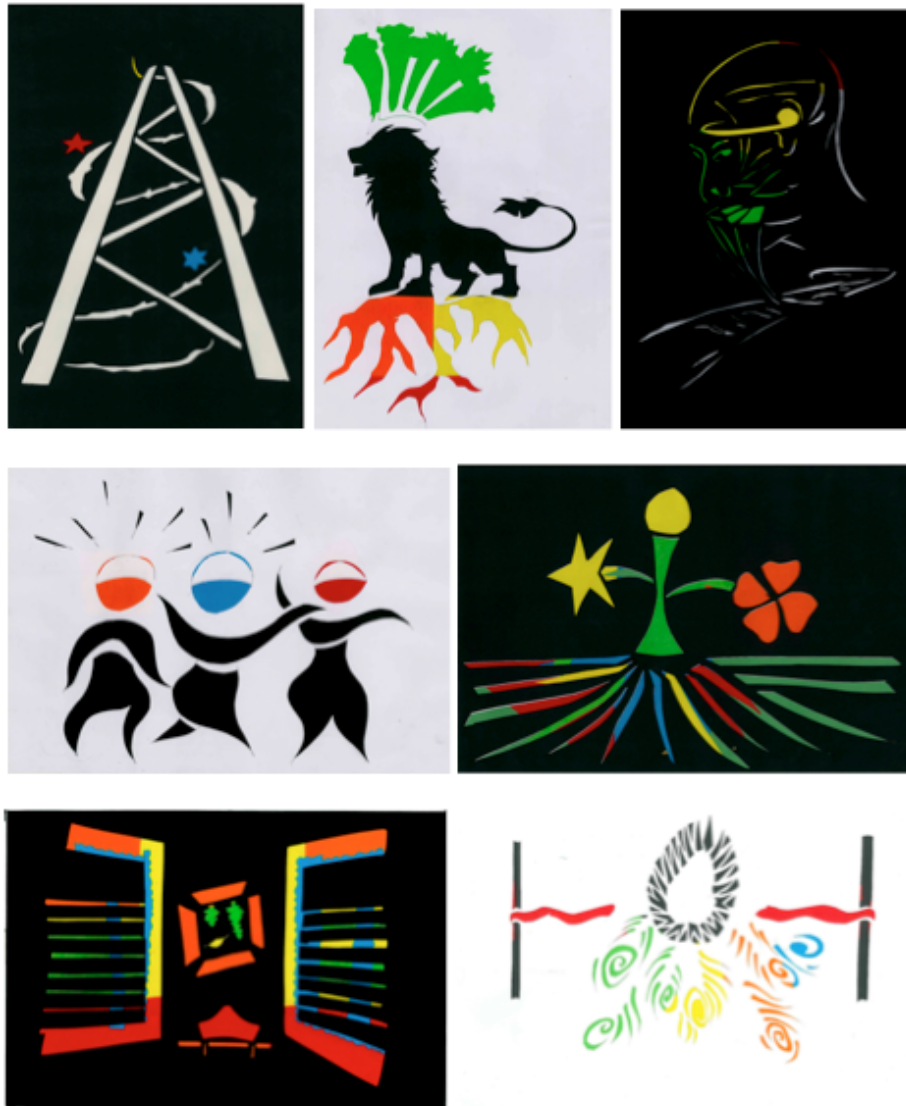


Figure 57 Papercuts Created by the Teacher-Trainees (Kingston Case Study)

### Soundscapes

Again utilizing less familiar expressive forms for the purpose of expanding the meaning-making capacities of the trainees, I introduced a soundscape activity that required development of sound-based responses to the artworks, engaging new sensory expressions for interpretive purposes. The soundscape concept involves the performance of sounds to create sensations that allow the creator and the observer to experience a particular idea or concept. The platform was chosen to support the trainees' abstraction of ideas metaphorically. And, given the strong presence that music has within Jamaican culture, the activity also presented

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an opportunity for the trainees to engage in a form that had positive cultural associations, undertaken and applied in new ways.

**SOUNDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT GRID**

SOUND	Quality/ Timbre	Duration/ Length	Pitch	Attack	Volume	Graphic Symbol

Figure 58 Soundscape Development Grid

The idea for the soundscape was inspired by a workshop<sup>20</sup> that Faye Stanley conducted in 2012. The platform was appropriated to offer the teacher trainees a dynamic space through which myriad imaginative possibilities might be imagined. The principles of variety, repetition, harmony, balance and emphasis were applicable to this work as they would be to a drawing or any visual media. Fig. 58 is the grid that the participants used to develop their soundscape arrangements.

To create the soundscape the participants identified three to four different sounds that represented the ideas that they had explored in the papercut artwork (Fig. 57), for example, a roar to suggest empowerment. To determine the quality of the sounds, they considered characteristics such as timbre, length, pitch, attack and volume. They also developed related

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<sup>20</sup> The workshop formed part of a series of initiatives sponsored by the Aspire Trust, a non-profit based in Liverpool, UK, that provides innovative and creative programs in schools and communities internationally. It was facilitated by three artists—Janinka Greenwood (drama specialist), Faye Stanley (music-based teaching artist), and Trudy-Ann Barrett (visual artist). The workshop alternated between the various artforms of drama, music and visual arts and ran over the course of three days for community participants of varying backgrounds and professional experience.

graphic symbols to represent particular sounds and help them to visualize the arrangement of the soundscape.

The various categories within the grid allowed for consideration of the different facets that comprised this and other art-related experiences, for example, how to arrange the varied elements to generate interest and movement throughout the artwork. They also helped to highlight the various layers that constitute the ‘whole’ of an artwork. The whole in this instance is the artful combination of these sounds into a soundscape. I have attempted to ‘reproduce’ the visual and sonic qualities that I experienced through the textual interpretation below. My interpretation is supplemented with the artwork that is referenced, as well as a screen shot of the students performing the soundscape, to facilitate relational readings of the experience (see Fig. 59).



<p>One foot in front of the other and... forward march</p> <p>The marching continues until two groups come face to face</p> <p>A hiccup sound (hii) is introduced on one side</p> <p>Followed shortly by a (hoo) response from the opposite side</p> <p>Back and forth the sounds exchange</p> <p>Until a whistling sound interrupts the pause between the two</p> <p>The whistling becomes slower</p> <p>The hii and hoo sounds gradually fade</p> <p>And only the whistle remains</p> <p>There's a stillness...</p> <p>Then the pattern begins AGAIN</p> <p>But a transition becomes apparent</p> <p>The hoo becomes hee</p> <p>And sounds of synchronized clapping fit right between the two</p> <p>The marching returns but this time it is on the spot and far more rapid</p> <p>Ooh here comes a quick and loud hii</p> <p>And in chorus all sides engage in a sustained hiii</p>	 
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Figure 59 Relationship Themed Soundscape

Group 2 discussed the elements of the composition in detail. They expressed, “the hii sound represented the bright colours that popped out of the composition” and “the marching sound signified the tower of strength.” They also explained that the whistling was reminiscent of “a whip going around the tower” and that the varied elements “came together like a

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relationship that reflects the unique characteristics of the parties involved but also a harmonizing between the entities”.

There were also suggestions of fragility and stability represented by the jagged edges of the curved lines and the solidness of diagonal or more upright ones, respectively. These, they said, inferred concepts of masculinity and femininity as well as the fact that the variety and unity experienced in the work reflected the Jamaican motto, “*Out of Many, One People.*” All of these descriptions and analyses came together to represent the dynamic and multifaceted nature of relationships. Fig. 60 below provides additional snapshots of groups in action.

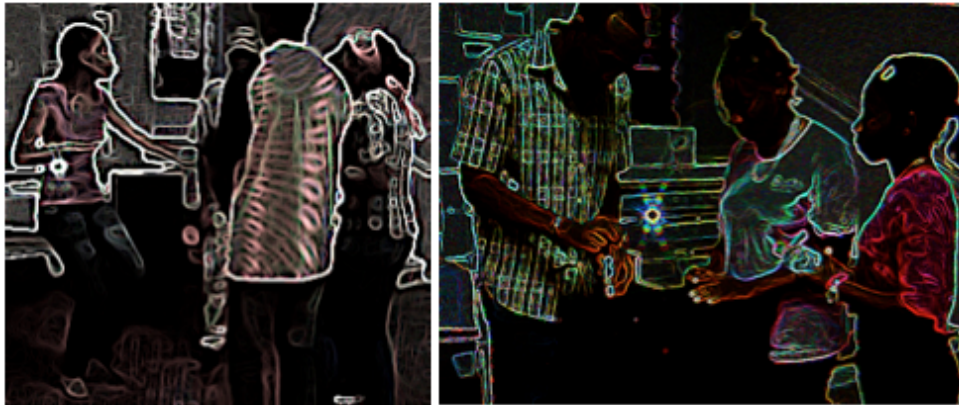


Figure 60 Groups 1 and 3 Performing Their Soundscapes

The trainees were surprised at the value an additional semiotic form brought to the experience. Casey remarked that it encouraged wholesome learning. She said, “Integrating visual arts with other art forms helps to demonstrate the relationships between them”. Derrick offered, “It showed you how dynamic interpretations of artworks can be.” In concurrence, Casey added, “The activity also helps you to make things simple, especially when you’re dealing with high school children.”

Just like the multimodal contemporary society we live in, different modes of inquiry contribute to the pedagogical experience, engendering not only interest, but extending ways

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of viewing artmaking, and fostering relevant connections to students' lives outside of the classroom. The aesthetic responses to the experience called on the engagement of the trainees' cumulative senses to decode and clarify the interpretations manifested through the sound-based art experience. Additionally, the simplicity of the structure of the soundscape and its improvisatory nature could help students to overcome their general insecurities about discussing works of art while expanding their repertoire of ways to interpret an artwork. Lisa, concurred,

I really had fun today during this session. It was a very interesting way of using sound or music to interpret a work of art. Usually I express that I don't like working in groups but in a case like this when we are allowed to do something creative it feels different and is much more fun. I could not have done this activity all by myself. I know this activity had a profound impact on me because even when I got home I was still chanting the rhythm we created. This was a very innovative way of allowing students to express themselves while learning.

### **Papercut Critique:**

To further engage with alternate modes of inquiry, we explored creative ways of structuring critiques around the artworks created. Critiques can be quite intimidating for lower secondary school art students; this type of process is more commonly explored with senior students. Typically, critiques involve whole classes and their teacher in dialogues that are both interpretive (What is the work about?) and evaluative (Is the work effective?). They provide one means by which the students' progress may be assessed, be it in the developmental stages of the work or, more often, at the end of an assignment.

Critiques also provide an opportunity for the teacher to assess the big picture of the gains the students have made, both in their outputs and in the ways that they are able to

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articulate their creative processes. Though critiques are meant to be student-centered, if students are not taught the necessary skills, it can be challenging for them to effectively present their work, resulting in the process being anxiety-producing or boring. In such circumstances, the critique may become teacher-focused, and fall short of the potential it holds to help students become more attuned to the relevant connections they have made through their artworks. The teacher-trainees attested to this by sharing their personal experiences of critiques, both as the subjects of critique and as facilitators of critiques. They discussed fears and vulnerabilities that, under the gaze of an ‘expert,’ they or their students might not be able to articulate their ideas effectively, and therefore will expose perceived ‘deficiencies.’

A creative interpretation of the critique structure could therefore serve to engender a more relaxed atmosphere for students to develop skills for unpacking the inherent meanings in an artwork and extend their vocabularies for discussing artworks. Additionally, it could help to validate what students bring to the experience, therefore helping them to feel empowered by it. An additional option for critique was explored based on critiquing strategies that art critic, Terry Barrett (2000) recommends. Participants were paired randomly to critique each other’s work. This format provides a more distanced view, which may allow more insight and openness than in situations evoking more of a sense of one’s vulnerability.

The strategy also required the trainees to undertake the critique in ways that reflected contemporary situations. The outputs were very entertaining yet they raised important contemporary concerns such as gendering, identity and conflict, among others. The participants assumed varied roles as newscasters, hosts of entertainment television, art critics, singers, poets, dancers etc.



Figure 61 Artwork that Inspired Kadian's Dramatic Critique

Here is an example from a student who adopted the role of an entertainment host. With energetic and continuous swirls and dipping motions, Kadian entered the stage while she chanted simultaneously:

“Nah go a nuh obeah<sup>21</sup> man” (I will not go to the obeah man)

“Nah go a nuh obeah man” (I will not go to the obeah man)

She referred to the work shown in Fig. 61 above, and introduced the piece as “Revival”. She went on to mention the different personalities that are represented in the artwork, explaining how the fluidity of the lines implied a form of “*movement and freedom*” that she associated with revivalism. Revivalism refers to an Afro-Christian religious folk form in Jamaica.

Revivalist churches are synonymous with healing centers and balm yards<sup>22</sup> where rituals take place. In the meetings, it is common practice for members to move around a circle, counter clockwise, with forward stepping motions and a forward bend of the body. Spinning, whirling and rotating are characteristic of the way the members worship. Singing

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<sup>21</sup> Obeah is an African retention associated with a system of beliefs that the use of magic ritual can either ward off misfortune or cause harm.

<sup>22</sup> A location where healing rituals associated with obeah is practiced.



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usually accompanies the beat of the drum, and it is not uncommon to witness dancing, spiritual possessions, healings, and occasional pronouncements of impending danger at these meetings.

She noted that the movements of the figures in the composition were reminiscent of gestures by the members. She also identified the different colours on their heads as being representative of the varied coloured turbans worn. The association she made between revivalism and obeah is attributable to the fact that they are both African retentions, and, as such, they are often lumped into the same category. Obeah is distinguished as a form of herbal and spiritual practice that is believed (by those who engage in the tradition), to cure ailments, and to also harm one's enemies. In Jamaica, many citizens therefore fear obeah men for the latter reasons. Hence, her reason for singing: "*Nah go a nuh obeah man.*"

This presentation raised awareness about cultures and traditions within the Jamaican society at large. Other examples (Figs. 62 & 63) have been presented in table form below to illustrate the different mediums through which the presentations were made. The examples both represent the actual work and the interpretations provided by participants.


<p>Watch me As I take my roots Watch me take my anchored heart From your grips Never mind Blue-eyed slave master That makes our lives Nothing but a natural disaster Rise up And strive We must fight To stay alive</p>	
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Figure 62 Poetic Interpretation of the Artwork

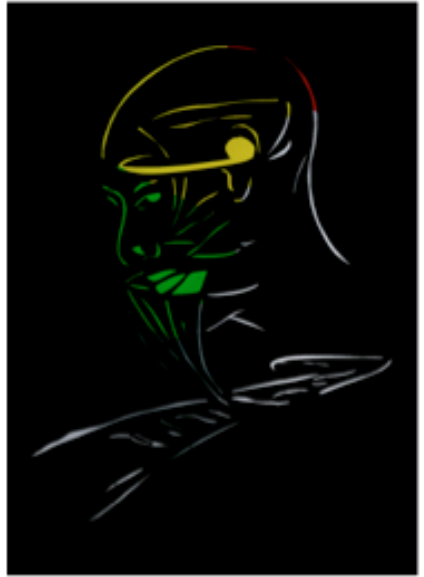
<p>Good evening ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to present to you this evening a piece of art that is presently being shown at the X Gallery.</p> <p>The artist is George Banks and the work has as a certain kind of openness. He speaks of the depression and struggles of the economic condition of our country, showing a reclusive figure contemplating his fate. Flickers of colour here and there however seem to give a bit of hope.</p> <p>There's a whole lot more to it but I would encourage you to come on down and have a look at it and see what it's all about. This is Emille Cain reporting from X Gallery. Thank you!</p>	
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Figure 63 A Reporter's Interpretation of the Artwork

Following this activity we compared and contrasted the meanings ascribed to the artworks by their originators with the contributions from those who interpreted the works. In so doing, a field of possibilities opened up for the participants to share and trade semiotic forms that were both individual and cultural. Not only did this prove to be an engaging strategy for interpreting art work, but it also supported an appreciation for the importance of their own and other's contributions as key features for enlarging the artmaking experience. One participant noted that this strategy,

Takes you away from the normal, formal setting where you probably get nervous and people are timid to talk. When you get into character it makes it become easier for you to express yourself.

Another participant shared, “It teaches you about how to speak well before an audience, and how you address the audience. So, it helps you to develop self-esteem”.

### **Project III: Personal Philosophies**

#### **Philosophical challenges issued and received**

A common proverb used in Jamaica states, “*Show me your company and I’ll tell you who you are.*” The tenets that undergird this maxim could extend to include a person’s priorities as indicative of their general philosophical position on life. Philosophy is a broad concept that encompasses wisdoms, ideologies, and critical inquiry but in the most basic sense it may be defined as the beliefs held by an individual that guide their practical affairs.

Teacher-trainees make choices and decisions informed by their philosophical beliefs regularly. They may choose how to present themselves, decide what topics are important to include in their lesson plans, considering how to develop a unit plan for a whole group that differentiates for student’s idiosyncrasies, or choose groups to join, to name a few. And because their philosophies are part and parcel of their persons, they rarely reflect on the motivations behind the choices they make.

This lesson was structured to encourage such reflection by asking trainees to identify their personal philosophies, analyze these foundational beliefs, and interpret them through an art project. The goal was to make connections between their everyday and teaching decisions and their personal beliefs. It was also to help them consider the compatibility of their own philosophies with those of the institution they attend, the wider field of education and the communities to which they belong.

The process began with the exploration of the concept of philosophy, and the creation of a shared definition of the term. We then engaged in a series of activities at demonstrating the layered and complex nature of personal, institutional, and community philosophies. In the first activity, the trainees constructed mind maps of all the communities to which they

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belonged. One participant questioned whether it was a bad thing that she did not belong to any community, and stated that she “just observes community.” I challenged her on the impossibility of this, and encouraged her to get started with her mind map. She began the undertaking, and shortly thereafter revealed she was part of art, religious, friends, animal, Afro-Caribbean, Rastafarian, poetry, painters, intellectual, reading and music communities. She was surprised by how many associations she had found.

The other participants, likewise, shared the communities to which they belonged that were outside of the ones she had named. They added teaching, church, school, family, Jamaican, particular place names of residential areas, institutions of learning, and places of work. They were then challenged to think about the overarching philosophies of each community they had mapped and to then select from the options the community they believed had the most influence on their current worldviews.

The next step of the process included a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the work of several renowned philosophers relevant to the field of education such as John Dewey, Paulo Freire and Socrates. Toward the end of the presentation, one student issued a challenge to me. Her concern was that I had only presented examples of white people. She stated,

If you're not taught what your background is all about, then chances are you will lose it. So when it comes to influencing others it is gonna be difficult. So in the case of not learning about the black perspective on education or any type of philosophy it kind of makes you either wonder or you may not even think about it cause all you've been given is just one perspective.

I welcomed the challenge and acknowledged the merits of her argument. By exclusion, I was contributing to a hidden curriculum that carried a message of cultural inferiority for black students. This omission stimulated discussion of the ways in which

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concepts such as race and class are socially constructed. I shared my own lack of awareness of educational philosophers who are also black, and acknowledged that scenarios such as this one, provide a platform to critique deficits in recorded history, and the consequences of curriculum constructed out of that false reality for students who then experience a curriculum does not mirror them.

While acknowledging the shortfalls of the selected group of philosophers, the rationale for their selection was based on their relevance to our study. For example, advocates learning grounded in the lives of students that honors what they bring to the learning experience, rather than regarding them as empty vessels in need of filling. In support of this notion of “empty vessels,” I acknowledged tendencies within the field of visual arts education to emphasize formal concerns over opportunities for students to make relevant connections through their artwork. As a parallel idea, the participants raised the fact that many visual art students often assess their own artistic capacities based on their ability to draw. Accordingly, those who are less capable in this one respect tend to feel sidelined by the teacher, contributing to self-criticality and consequently, disinterest in art. This described scenario represents what Gude (2004) refers to as creating a “hierarchy for the talented” (para 30).

The conversation evolved into an examination of the ways that traditional local knowledge and products are shelved in favour of imported ones, despite their comparable or in some cases, superior value. The participants further conceded that this higher value placed on things “foreign” has resulted in severe consequences for the local economy, and extends to views by some Jamaicans that the US is the ‘promised land.’ This is in spite of the many compromises that impinge on the quality of their lives when they settle there.

Socrates’ promotion of questioning offers both a philosophical and practical approach to these issues. Students experienced in Socratic habits of questioning and critical thinking are better equipped to challenge the marginalized situations that they encounter. Further

support lies in Freire's (1996) assertion that, "people will be more the more they not only critically reflect upon their existence but critically act upon it" (p. 90). Out of these discussions, a challenge was issued for the teacher-trainees to consider the deeper purpose of education, and in what ways the education we promote does or does not lead to sustainable practices.

The video, *Schooling the World* by Black (2010) offered further support for these discussions, framing education as a form of colonization that serves to indoctrinate individuals in dominant worldviews, even though such views do not reflect their personal or cultural circumstances. The trainees contributed personal experiences as points in the subsequent discussion to demonstrating that these forms of prejudice can be both externally and internally driven, and often manifest as hidden curriculum. I also offered some personal experiences to extend some of the issues raised. At this point in the conversation I refocused the lesson to inquire about the "black" philosophers or black people, popular or otherwise, whose philosophies had impacted the participants' conceptions of life and the values they hold. Responses included the everyday heroes in the home, such as mothers and grandmothers, cultural and national heroes of Jamaica, and more renowned leaders, such as Martin Luther King Jr.

Having made these connections, the students were now ready to interpret their philosophies. They returned to the mind maps created previously, and the philosophies that their communities promoted. These were then linked with the philosophies espoused by their black 'heroes.' This activity served to identify and bring specificity to their prevailing beliefs and personal philosophies. Once clarified, graphic representations of their philosophies were created. These are represented in Fig. 64 below.



Figure 64 Trainees' Graphic Interpretations of their Personal Philosophies

#### **Project IV: Still life drawing (as a metaphorical self-portrait)**

Self-portraits, like other activities carried out in lower secondary art classes, can become clichéd art projects. As Gude (2000) points out, this is attributable to the reality that “many art teachers image their practices within the traditions they were exposed to in their introduction to artmaking” (p. 1). This practice continues in spite of the fact that contemporary art offers myriad ways of imaging the self that may be appropriate for the classroom context. Metaphorical self-portraits provide one of those pathways.

Given the scheduling constraints of this workshop, I wanted to provide enjoyable and accessible ways that the participants might engage with this topic. I drew the motivation for this activity from the common saying, “you are what you wear,” a reflection of the material

culture in which we live, that places emphasis on the things possessed, and how they serve to convey our image to the world. Accordingly, the phenomenon promotes a culture where one's identity is constantly being performing and re-formed. Whilst some debates concerning this phenomenon relate it to growing narcissism, others legitimize it as a method for gathering and expressing autobiographical information about ourselves.

The latter application aligns with the ambitions of this project, wherein metaphors are employed to render the 'self' visible. The project was similarly undertaken in the Christchurch study, with different types of objects selected for the expression of self. Whereas the Christchurch students selected objects from their homes that held personal and cultural significance for them, these participants selected five objects from the immediate environment, natural and/or built. The objects were to metaphorically represent how they saw themselves, personally and culturally. The juxtaposition of the objects was intended to reflect the layered nature of their personalities.

Having purposively selected the objects, the participants arranged them as still life compositions that doubled as metaphorical self-portraits. The objects were drawn from direct observation, using white cartridge paper, fine point pens, markers and charcoal, and the participants were encouraged to represent a range of values<sup>23</sup> in their artworks to make the compositions impactful. The results of the exercise are shown below in Fig. 65.

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<sup>23</sup> Value in visual arts refers to the lightness or darkness of a colour.



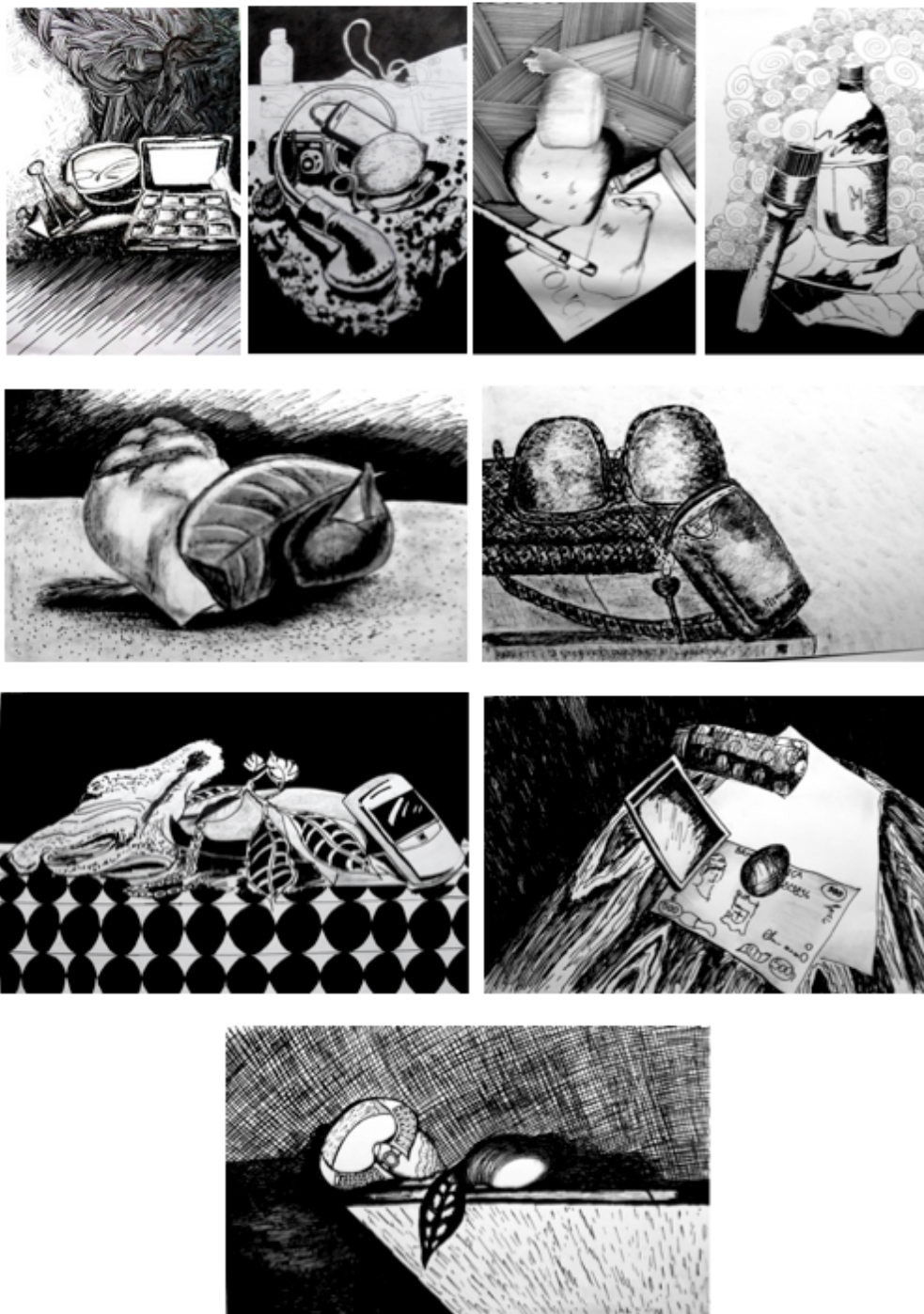


Figure 65 Still Life Compositions (Metaphorical Self-Portraits)

Subsequent to the completion of the drawings, the participants reflected on aspects of the process that were particularly significant for them and any revelatory moments in the experience. Casey remarked,

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Just thinking about things to represent me was a challenge but as soon as I started searching I found that it was not that hard. There were quite a number of objects that I could compare myself with.

Like Casey, Sheena also remarked on how the activity prompted serious reflection about how she saw herself. She said, “I found this activity interesting because it helped me to dig deep within myself.” She even mentioned that the experience evoked childhood experiences for her. George added that, in addition to helping him to discover more about himself, the activity was also useful in helping him “to understand the others better.” As part of the process of unpacking the meanings in the work, and in response to the artwork below, Natalie shared:

The list of items I selected included a mirror for my reflectiveness and a stone to illustrate my process in life and my personality. The umbrella demonstrates my protective side. The five hundred dollar bill shows that I am valuable and want to be of some value to my peers and community. Then finally, the blank sheet of paper suggests that I document my journey through my artworks.



Figure 66 Natalie's Metaphorical Self-Portrait

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The placement and treatment (texture-wise) of the objects, especially the desk, added another layer to Natalie's composition (Fig. 66). Unlike the aerial view Natalie intended, the work took on the appearance of a volcano with running lava over the sides. The white paper seemed to be the opening of the volcano, and the other objects felt like they teetered on the edge of the volcano's open mouth. When I shared this reaction with her she concurred that she could see this too, and said that it perhaps represented how she felt psychologically.

Due to time constraints the activity ended prematurely. Participants were therefore asked to continue the reflections in their journals.

### Inside/Outside of the Window Frame



Figure 67 Fragmentation and Jigsaws (Excerpt from Visual Journal)

Pedagogy is complex, and must respond not only to the students themselves, but to the challenges and constraints of the setting. Within this research, there were a number of variables that affected the project, the chief being time constraints. The longest sessions were held in the evening after the participants were saturated with full course loads, theory-based classes, and a number of assignments to complete. Accordingly, I had to find ways to

stimulate and engage them in spite of the fact that their participation in the workshops was voluntary, and did not contribute to course grades. The constant shifting of strategies to accommodate these challenges not only affected choice and outcomes, but also occasionally resulted in my own sense of disequilibrium, leading me to put aside some tried and tested strategies, and to reconsider some theoretical foundations upon which my work had long been grounded (Fig. 67).

Like the bricoleur, given the emergent nature of the work, I had to draw upon the materials at hand to make the best use of the opportunities that were presented. It often required my stepping back as “expert” to adopt more of an inquirer’s role. The benefit of such negotiation included the increased likelihood that participants engaged as co-inquirers, when they saw me functioning in this more emergent fashion. The optimal art classroom requires improvisation and the ability to be responsive, not only to the personal and cultural realities of the students, but also the conditions within place.

### **Project V: Exploring Ideas of Community through a Collaborative Art Project**

This collaborative art project represented an attempt to bridge academic interests with those of the wider community to facilitate dialogues (visual and spoken) that were grounded in the realities of both contexts. Since both interests contribute to the development of the arts within the Jamaican society, the day’s proceedings served to deliberately investigate the new space that their intersection invited. The project involved a series of exercises that explored the complexities of community through a variety of forms that included text-based, performance-based and visual outputs.

There were eight participants in this project, seven of whom were teacher-trainees and the eighth member, Shelley, was a member of the local artistic community. Her experiences

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as an artist and director of several national visual arts projects involving youth and adults, presented an opportunity to explore more grounded perspectives of art practice.

Relationships are fundamental to any collaborative undertaking. Participants need to develop a sense of trust in order to engage in the endeavour productively and meaningfully. Consequently, since Shelley was unfamiliar with the group of teacher-trainees, an icebreaker was utilized that had participants identify basic qualities that they had in common, and begin to develop a sense of community. They were given a series of commands that required them to form groups according to the characteristics they shared. Though these commands were simple, they required the participants to move beyond their comfort zones and social circles to inquire about the less obvious characteristics of their peers. The accelerated pace of the activity also required that they be very observant about things they might have normally taken-for-granted.

A second relationship building exercise was undertaken in which participants discovered more intimate information about each other. They formed pairs and shared some significant biographical information. They listened attentively to the information, and then presented their partner's biography as if it was their own. This allowed them to become acquainted with each other and helped to create more comfortable working relationships.

Having set the stage for the participants to work together productively, the 'big idea' of Community was introduced. Working in three groups, each group randomly chose from a box a slip of paper with the name of an everyday object. Each named object was a metaphor for community. Shapes were chosen in like manner. Both the metaphors and the shapes served as tools to frame their ideas conceptually. Participants were instructed to create two headings on one paper, one representing the name of the object they chose (for example, mirror), whilst the other was community. Under the headings, they were to first list the characteristics of the object, and then identify characteristics of community that align with the

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metaphorical object (see Figs. 68, 69 & 70). The exercise facilitated a multi-faceted view of community that considered both the strengths and limitations of membership in communities.

<b>COMMUNITY IS A MIRROR</b>	
A mirror...	A community...
1. Reflects images.	1. Reflects culture.
2. Tells the truth; has no colour; reflects the environment.	2. Relies on the behavior of persons within it to establish its identity.
3. Comes in different sizes and shapes.	3. Consists of diverse people, beliefs etc.
4. Evokes emotions.	4. Can be a place of pain and hurt or loyalty.
5. Builds or destroys the viewer's self-confidence.	5. Can build or destroy self-confidence through its values and beliefs.
6. Allows you to present the image/costume that you want to show.	6. Sees only what is projected, which may or may not be real.
7. Gives eyes where we have none.	7. Has safety and neighbourhood watches to investigate suspicious activities; looks out for each other.
8. Is sometimes used for safety.	8. Is a safety net where you can feel comfortable and be yourself.
9. Can be deceptive- some things appear closer than they really are; Is convex.	9. Changes- bonds may not be as close as you once believed. People may grow apart, as they get older.

Figure 68 Metaphor & Community (Group 1)

The activity above stimulated discussions about the various cultures that are subsets of the Jamaican culture. A number of dichotomies were raised. For example, Fig. 68, number 5 references the dichotomy of community as both supporter and designator of its members. Situations in communities wherein those who speak out against its injustices become labeled as “informers” was offered as one example of such contrasts.

The ‘informer culture’ in Jamaica, and elsewhere (“Nark” in New Zealand) is frowned upon, especially in volatile communities, where members pledge allegiance to one another, which often requires silence in the face of wrongdoings of their fellow members. Speaking out carries the potential of banishment or worse from those communities. Conversely, the community might defend one of its own as a ‘good person’ in cases of confrontation between the police and a community gang member. To balance the discussion, we also examined this phenomenon within white-collar communities, and corrupt practices at various levels in the Jamaican society that continue to exist simply because persons are not held accountable for their actions.

Another dichotomy concerned the social constructions of class (Fig. 68, number 2). Membership in communities either carries privileges or disadvantages, as represented in a popular Jamaican song titled, “*Wrong Address*” by Etana (2008). The song was based on a true story about an individual who was denied a job based on her address and social class. The chorus of the song goes,

*We don't want no trouble.*  
*We don't want no trouble, no day.*  
*‘Cause lady, where you come from,*  
*People die there everyday.*  
*For our safety that's where you should stay.*

The issue of belonging to the “wrong” community was also discussed as being synonymous with the ‘race card’. As a legacy of colonialism, certain opportunities for upward mobility were, at one time dependent on skin tone. The lighter the shade of an individual’s skin, the better their chances were for advancement. This was despite the fact that although the population of Jamaica is ethnically diverse, the majority of people are of African

descent. For example, for many years it was conventional for flight attendants to have lighter skin, “good hair,” and to meet particular weight requirements.

Circumstances such as these, combined with the visual culture from magazines, television advertisements, and pop culture leads some of Jamaica’s most vulnerable populations to despise their ethnic features. This has led to a surge in skin bleaching, even among adolescents. They have internalized the idea that being of a lighter shade makes them more attractive. The art classroom provides a safe and productive place to tease apart the complexities of these issues.

Other issues were also raised regarding the way some community members feel threatened by another’s achievements. In Jamaica this is commonly referred to as the ‘crab in the barrel syndrome,’ where persons try to impede others’ progress by ensuring they stay at the bottom of the barrel. In a related vein, the participants raised the issue of members of a community who have expectations for ongoing support from other community members who have successful professional lives.

All these points served to portray the different facets of community as expressed by this group of participants in this research study. They demonstrate that while the things that define a community are the things the members share in common, there are far more complex layers to the makeup of any community. Below (Fig. 69), group 2 offers a different set of perspectives on community based on the river metaphor.



<b>COMMUNITY IS A RIVER</b>	
A river...	A community...
1. Is calm.	1. Gives members a sense of security.
2. Has Movement.	2. Has members who try to be better in terms of productivity.
3. Is deep.	3. Is strongly knitted together through values.
4. Is wide.	4. Socialization in terms of development.
5. Is stoney.	5. Stands firm in terms of norms; Has members who are cold in heart.
6. Is clean.	6. Has members who are pure in their hearts.
7. Is rough.	7. Has one leadership, one value (Is autocratic).
8. Is peaceful	8. Is a place where people value each other's space.
9. Is diverse.	9. Is comprised of various ethnic groups and backgrounds.

Figure 69 Metaphor &amp; Community (Group 2)

In contrast to group 1's critical interpretations of community, Group 2 focused on the more positive and customary notions of wholeness, diversity and security. They did, however, raise the issue of autocracy that sometimes manifests in communities. Rather than reflecting the combined values of the community members, some communities are instead subject to the dictates of their leaders, and members blindly follow in a cultish way, even when to do so is to their detriment. We noted the implications this scenario has for many adolescents who struggle to fit in with the 'in crowd,' at the expense of compromising their personal values, and eventually losing themselves in the process.

<b>COMMUNITY IS A BOWL</b>	
A bowl...	A community...
1. Holds items.	1. Contains morals and values.
2. Takes many forms.	2. Is diverse.
3. Used to cover things.	3. Provides protection for its members.
4. Used to mix things in.	4. Is an amalgamation of people of different races and backgrounds (eg. Church).
5. Can be used as a design.	5. Requires planning and research.
6. Is an art product.	6. The community can be seen as a creative setting.
7. Has height and depth.	7. Is high in pride and deep in culture.
8. Gives shape to other forms.	8. Influences and molds others.
9. Can be used as a weapon.	9. Is subject to positive and negative labeling.
10. Can be used as a musical instrument.	10. Is a harmonious blend of varied interests.

Figure 70 Metaphor &amp; Community (Group 3)

Group 3's metaphors and correlating statements (Fig. 70) were a fusion of those presented by the other two groups. They focused on communities being diverse in their makeup, looking after the interests of their membership, and being subject to labeling based on the values they espouse. They were, however, adamant that community requires 'maintenance'. They also emphasized the pride communities take in preserving their morals, values, and culture, and highlighted mentorship as a means of doing so.

The groups negotiated some of these key ideas further through tableaux scenarios. The embodied ideas they produced added extra layers to the complex and dynamic understandings that they had initially ascribed to community. The combined preceding

activities set the tone for the participants to engage with the more visual aspects of the project. In this phase, they referenced the shapes they had received earlier and considered the characteristics of the shapes as they related to the concept of community. They then pooled these ideas with the ones that had evolved from their earlier brainstorming and the tableaux to develop an artwork that more fully expressed community as a big idea.

The artworks are represented in Figs. 71, 72 and 73 below. Each group presented their artworks and the concepts that underpinned them to the rest of the workshop participants. Discussions followed the presentations to either elaborate on the ideas presented, to challenge them, or to offer recommendations concerning the ways that the technical aspects of the work might be improved, or better communicate the intentions of the artwork.

This forum allowed multiple perspectives to come to the fore that have significance for the ways that visual arts pedagogy is conceived and implemented at the lower secondary education levels. Whilst all of the works are presented and discussed, due to the space limitations of the thesis, I have chosen to focus in-depth one artwork and the accompanying discussion that addressed the most poignant conceptions of community.

### *Community is a Mirror*



Figure 71 Group 1's Artwork: Community is a Mirror

Group 1 used a combination of layering and juxtaposition of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional forms to depict their concept of community. The shape they chose was a circle and they represented this as both positive and negative shapes (the circle itself and the sheet from which the circle was cut). The participants noted that the multicolored and varied shapes were indicative of the diverse makeup of the community. The ways they clustered the objects were also meant to represent the denseness of some inner-city communities. Synonymous with this idea, they said the mirrors (the circles) also represented how the members are always on the lookout to ensure that their people remain safe, and to note any signs of unfamiliarity in the community.

Interestingly, the placement of the objects within the composition reminds me of a tool hanger, which might infer that some mirrors are more suited to some purposes than others and hence there is the option to pick the one that best fits the situation at hand. It references for me the fact that there are far more layers to a community than one 'tool' might allow us to examine. Though visually this image is the least resolved of the three images, the design strategies of combining precisely cut circles with ones that have jagged edges, half- and full- circles, all allude to the complexities of community.

*Community is a River*

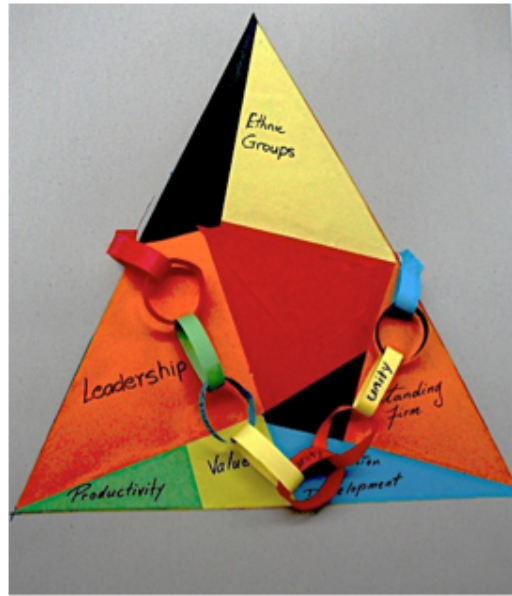


Figure 72 Group 2's Artwork: Community is a River

Group 2 chose the triangle as their shape. The participants mentioned that they used an isosceles triangle to reflect the reality that communities are not perfect. They also expressed that their use of the smaller triangles (labeled with the characteristics identified in the previous activity) within the larger triangle represents the subsets that comprise community. By juxtaposing the different coloured triangles, they achieved the illusion of planes which allow the form to be experienced both two- and three-dimensionally (Fig. 72).

The participants had unconsciously created tension by using a geometric shape to represent a river, which is organic by nature. This tension was mitigated through the way the colours were placed within the triangle to lead the eye through the composition. The resulting movement allowed the work to achieve some measure of flow, as in that of a river. This aspect, they said, was representative of the dynamics within community. In addition, they remarked that the use of the chain-like structure was meant to demonstrate the unification of the community based on the saying, “A chain is as strong as its weakest link.” Shelley noted

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that the chain by association could also represent bondage. Nathan added that the activities that contribute to the well-being of the community, if left unchecked, could also contribute to its demise.

### *Community is a Bowl*



Figure 73 Group 3's Artwork: Community is a Bowl

Group 3 chose a more literal representation than the others, with the elements within the composition more readily identifiable (see Fig. 73). Derrick explained,

The main concept of our community is equality. The idea of a bowl with soup is...a soup has many ingredients, right? And that's just the diversity of our community. When you put the ingredients together it becomes one.

However, even as he emphasized the diversity of the community, the group was also quick to point out that,

... we [the community members] decide which ingredients to use. That's why we have a hand in there to show that we select the ingredients, but the community has to decide on what will work and what will not work.

At this point, one of the participants asked whether there were negative elements in the picture because she only identified positive ones. They answered in the affirmative and a chorus of laughter followed. I entered the conversation at this moment to inquire about the small truck in the bottom right-hand corner that seems to be moving out of the picture frame, and asked whether the truck was removing the 'negative stuff.' The group members confirmed that my theory was right, and at that point, the other members of the audience began to examine the work more closely. Upon close inspection, the objects on top of the truck appeared to be two fish. I asked what the removal of the fish meant. The answer came back: "We are keeping the community clean!"

A participant remarked, "I saw the shape but I wasn't sure if it was a fish. A fish fi true?<sup>24</sup> (Are those really fish?) And you are all understanding the culture of fish?" They replied, "Yeah, wi live a Jamaica, yu nuh!" (Yes, we live in Jamaica, you know!) By now, everyone in the room recognized that a discussion of controversial issues would follow. We examined the different cultural associations that fish carry within the Jamaican context. Fish is a meat we enjoy in the island culture of Jamaica. In more universal ways, it represents the Christian faith, and is also a metaphor used for members of the gay community. Based on the context clues provided, it was apparent that it was the latter application that they referenced. We then brainstormed possible reasons why "fish" and "gay" would employ the same symbology, leading to further questions.

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<sup>24</sup> This statement is written in patois, the native language of Jamaica.

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The group was asked to clarify why black was the colour used to represent the unwanted objects. They replied, "...when you're doing Western Art and even in our culture, when you consider black...it rarely means something positive!" This led to productive but intense exchanges about the tensions held in this reality. Everyone in the room was 'black,' and yet, even in an all-black group, the negative stereotype of blackness was being perpetuated. The presenter insisted that there was a distinction between the negativity they associated with the 'black fish' and how they viewed black people generally, and tried to refocus our attention on the "fish."

However, the group was asked to elaborate further on the choice to make the fish black instead of the other colours within the composition. The group responded by saying, "These are all ingredients, not fish! Shelley was dissatisfied with the response challenging the discussion further:

Yes, but think of them as people. Think of Jamaica now as a cultural melting pot, because we have a lot of people here from a lot of different cultures, from different countries and dem look like dem odda colour deh (they look like those other colours). So you expel the 90% [the people of African descent] and keep the expatriates?

The discussion extended to a further examination of the racial and socio-economic divides within the Jamaican society and eventually led to the examination of the ramifications such positions bring to bear on the classroom context, especially where sexual orientation and race are concerned. The questions centered on the line between a teacher's convictions and beliefs and students' persuasions. The group considered whether it is our duty as teachers to impose our beliefs on others, or to discriminate against them for having outlooks that differ from our own.



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The end of the workshop left the group with more questions than answers, an indication of the complexity of these issues. The activity had engaged learners in investigation through the arts of authentic, contemporary issues holding personal and cultural significance. The group expressed desire for more experiences of this kind, and the efforts noted by students to set up ongoing contact with the community member who had participated with them, indicated that the experience had successfully engaged participants, and served to build relationships among them.

I appreciated the ‘realness’ of this experience. It was an authentic witness that communities can thrive regardless of diverse beliefs and orientations. It was also an opportunity to step back and examine the fact that as teachers and researchers our positions are never neutral. Accordingly, it brought a number of perspectives to the fore.

The questions, noticings, wonderings and promptings woven together with the personal and socio-cultural contributed to a series of inquiries that legitimised the art classroom as a “safe space” to discuss “unsafe ideas.” Additionally, the experience prompted the examination of power roles within the classroom including: What knowledge(s) are worthy of consideration? Who is allowed entry into conversations? and What is worthy of inclusion in the curriculum? Or even, What does the hidden curriculum teach students about themselves?

### Closing the Case



Figure 74 Transposing the Story (Excerpt from Visual Journal)

The window is now behind me (Fig. 74), unlike prior scenarios where I was behind it. This depiction represents my current distance from the research situation. I have developed a more complete view of what exists beyond my own frames of understanding and ways of knowing that are conventionally valued in research. As is true of my experience as a painter, it is in stepping back from the canvas that I am able to more clearly identify what works or does not work.

As enquirers, both the trainees and I have been granted access to spaces that were beyond what a solely intellectual orientation could provide. In response, we have been challenged to continue noticing what is there to be noticed, and to make those noticings available for others, who may also become attuned to the power of aesthetics and art to reveal amongst other things, our senses of self, place, and community.

## Part Two: Analysis and Implications of the Findings

### **Within-Case Analysis**

The preceding examples of the trainees' individual and collective artmaking experiences have generated themes that carry implications for the teacher as inquirer, as well as the potential to address authentic contemporary concerns through artmaking. An extended discussion of these themes is presented below in relation to the research focus of the ways in which the artmaking process facilitates teacher-trainee negotiations of their senses of self, place and community. The themes were:

1. Personal and Cultural Connections
2. Empowered Experiencing
3. The Visual Arts Classroom as a Place

### **Personal and Cultural Connections**

Just as a house is not a home, the physical space of the art classroom is not what makes it 'real' for those who use it. Rather, it is the space provided for entries from the participants' personal and cultural lives, the strategies and examples used to legitimize their experiences, and the dynamic and complex interactions that these provoke, that make the art classroom and artmaking, meaningful for art teachers and students. Accordingly, one of the emergent themes from this study centered on the personal and cultural connections that the participants brought to, and took away from, the experience.

In all of the activities, there were opportunities for the participants to bring themselves to the artmaking experience in authentic ways. The discussions made room for relating the topic or concept being investigated to their personal, cultural, or professional lives. My own sharing also helped to make the experience less intimidating. In accordance, this presented

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openings for multiple views on an issue to come to the fore, and for this exchange to broaden perspectives on issues or topics.

An important issue raised was the fact that though we were all Jamaicans, we had different realities. Toni shared, “each community in a country [rural] or urban area has something that is unique. When we look at Jamaica, every parish speaks differently and it makes you have that particular identity, making everything diverse and different.” The charge then, is to recognize the unique experiences that the students bring to the classroom and to capitalize on them, so that learning might be meaningful for them.

Through the use of open-ended, participatory structures, opportunities were made available to interpret and make sense of the assigned tasks. For example, the performance-oriented activities such as the soundscape and the dramatizations called for sensory awareness to embody the concepts and ideas that the participants wanted to communicate. In the improvisatory activity described in the introductory section of this chapter for example, Lisa demonstrated her total absorption in the process by saying,

Today’s class brought out the suppressed child within me. I can vividly remember my childhood drawings, and how I expressed myself artistically. Now that I am an adult I thought I had lost that part of me. This activity brought back childish memories as well as allowed me to express myself like I was three years old again. I felt free and I had fun doing it. I did not feel restricted to the norm of taking my time to create a beautiful work of art. I really enjoyed working spontaneously. Probably if I was given more time to do the work I would try to perfect it because of how I think now and what I have practiced.

Lisa’s reflection affirmed that students rarely enjoy the creative process when art classes are exclusively oriented toward the creation of finished products. This creative process provided for participants to make personal connections with the experience, finding

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ways to link it to their own practices or plans for their practicum experiences. For example, in reflection on the activity dramatizing big ideas, Casey mentioned, “The activity was real to life and suited for the classroom. It will definitely help students to talk about their work as well as others.” She elaborated further by saying,

I have encountered students who are very dramatic, and I know these kinds of introductory strategies will help to introduce a lesson effectively or even help with students’ self-esteem—those students who are shy to come up and talk about what they have placed on paper because sometimes it might be too personal.

The Head of Department presented arguments that concurred with the ones above. She stated,

Based on the responses of the targeted participants, Visual Arts teachers in training, it was apparent that the methods employed in the workshops were deemed appropriate. The researcher/ facilitator of the sessions observed by me, was able to help students synthesize and translate the stated objectives into personalized and usable knowledge. Her hands-on, student-focused approach enabled students to realize the importance of “place” in their lives and their profession. When the ‘place-based’ model was introduced to the students, the resulting lively group discussion in which they shared their personal connections to these concepts indicated an understanding and acceptance of same.... The facilitator’s use of solid, motivating practices, which emphasized strategies for art-making and teaching art... resulted in students’ hypotheses about applying the strategies in their own pedagogical endeavours.

In summary, the experiences served to provide expressive pathways for the personal feelings and understandings of the participants, and forums for meaningful construction of ideas through creative artmaking projects. The multifaceted inquiry lenses supported the

collaborative exchange of ideas, thus enriching the understandings and meaning-making capacities of the participants through their connections with one another.

### **Empowered Experiencing**

Walker (1997) suggests that students think creatively and pursue meaning when “enabling structures” are provided. When these are provided, they lead to what Gude (2007) refers to as empowered experiencing, whereby appropriate scaffolding and knowledge enables the learner “to notice and interpret a range of visual practices.” In this project, there were several enabling structures that were employed, including big ideas, key concepts, artist exemplars, artmaking boundaries, play, and metaphors. The ones that were most frequently applied throughout this project however were: artmaking boundaries, play and metaphors. They are discussed below.

### ***Artmaking Boundaries***

In the introductory section of this chapter, it was noted that an open-ended structure of artmaking contributes to some art teachers finding the process of teaching art elusive. This brings to the fore the fact that “too much freedom can be as inhibiting as too many restrictions” (Walker 2001, p. v). Accordingly, artmaking requires some form of structural framing or containment, in order to achieve productive outcomes. Through the establishment of artmaking boundaries, and more transparent connections to the lives of learners, Walker (2001) suggests that they are empowered to “make more purposeful aesthetic [and conceptual] decisions” (p. 74).

Artmaking boundaries in this study engendered a sense of disequilibrium for the participants that required them to make accommodations through restructuring their ways of thinking to suit the new conditions with which they were presented. They served to guide

participant pursuits of meaning-making. The boundaries utilized herein included formal choices such as participant use of techniques that reflected local and contemporary life to interpret artworks, the restriction in dramatization, setting limits on colour palette or material choice, amongst other boundaries. The choice of boundaries in these scenarios was never random but instead was intended to help the participants move away from the familiar to explore the potential of abstract ideas to arrive at different ways of knowing.

### *Play*

Play provided another critical enabling structure that extended throughout the project. By nature, play calls upon our abilities to negotiate and improvise. It therefore provides an active space where structure, intention, design, and modification are employed in order to make sense of a situation. This implies that play requires a structure to contain it, in order for the outputs to be meaningful. This meaning comes from the layered feelings, experiences, understandings, and in-the-moment creations that individuals bring to the preexisting structure, to broaden the parameters for sense-making. In the layering process, a critical distance is provided that allows for more intuitive and embodied understandings than would be available through more rational processes.

In the series of projects that constituted the research study, play was evident through the participants' total absorption in the artmaking process, and in the ways that they slid back and forth between surrender and autonomy. Play undergirded their evolving capacity to trust the artmaking process, without knowing what the end products would look like. Play could be recognized in the quality of attention participants committed to the artmaking process, wherein they were able to suspend rational thinking and respond to the emergent ideas and forms with sensory awareness. Play was also evidenced in their juxtaposing and layering of

individual ideas with other group members' ideas to arrive at innovative solutions to their creative challenges.

### *Metaphors*

Metaphors provided yet another enabling structure that enhanced the ways that the participants experienced the artmaking endeavour. Leaning on Irwin's (2004) assertion that "Through metaphoric structures...we come to understand the world through aesthetic inquiry", the participants, in a number of instances, were asked to employ metaphors to guide their conceptual undertakings (p. 46). Through this modality, participants were able to develop parallels and comparisons to yield new ideas. They did this by substituting the salient features of the familiar for the unfamiliar in order to make sense of the latter.

The participants and I traced our earliest experiences with metaphors to our grandparents' use of proverbs to help us understand contemporary situations. Accordingly, we recognized the legitimacy and utility of metaphors to make understandings accessible and rich for learners and to enlarge our perspectives of phenomena. Metaphoric structures in this project were employed in pursuit of deeper understandings of a situation, and to enable participants to respond both imaginatively and creatively to the concept or phenomenon under investigation.

Lisa's reflection of the experience sums up her sense of being empowered by the experience:

I am particularly pleased with the thought that was put into it to make it fun and very interactive. If it was just a lecture every day I know I would be distracted at times. The content and the exercise each day was very stimulating and I learnt a lot. Workshops like these should happen more often, especially for us as art educators.



### **The Visual Arts Classroom as a Place**

Klein (2000) purports that a reading of place necessitates “coming to understand what is happening there, what has happened, what is happening, and what might happen” (in Carpenter, 2003, p. 14). Such inquiry provides a useful frame for identifying the characteristics of the art classroom as a place that contributes to the possibilities and dynamics that occur there.

#### ***What happened there?***

##### *Routine/Sense of Familiarity*

Tuan (1977) distinguishes space from place by virtue of the sense of belongingness that it provides for the person inhabiting it. He says, “what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value” (p. 6). One of the things that scholars who write about place attachment suggest is that place should offer a sense of routine (Ashcroft, 2001; Ellis, 2005; Eyles, 1989). Through the routine use of the classroom space, participants develop a level of familiarity with them by virtue of the interactions that helped to characterize them and as such, assigned value to them. This was evidenced in Toni’s reflection when she said, “You used a lot of interesting strategies that will help students engage with the activities so even though we were tired like crazy, we still came to the classes.”

##### *Facilitator/Participant Relationships*

A part of the valuing is attributable to the quality of the relationships shared between the participants and myself, for as Ellis (2005) points out, “place also depends on who is there.” Throughout the interactions I endeavoured to develop healthy relationships with the participants that allowed them to feel that both they and their contributions were valued.

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Through my actions, I also sought to lead by example by actively demonstrating the things I was encouraging them to do in their own practices. As testament to this, Casey reported,

It's been a positive workshop for me. Even though I have some experience in the classroom, things were new to me as well. Even yesterday for the drawing activity, I listened to you pushing, saying stuff to students to get them to actually feel comfortable with the work by asking what else can you do? The different questions and statements that you made presented creative ways of assessing the work. I think this is a creative way instead of saying no man, that needs more, it nuh (does not) look good. You know, instead of the ways that some of us really use.

### *Sense of belongingness*

The art classroom in each of the workshop scenarios provided a space where the participants felt a sense of belongingness. This was evidenced through their repeated attendance despite the scheduling constraints that they faced, their openness to the activities, and their willingness to try new things. The head of the art department bore witness to this when she said,

Overall, I witnessed high levels of student engagement, and the participating students demonstrated readiness to participate in the activities and their responsiveness during the sessions. I was aware of the following situations beyond the researcher/facilitator's control:

- Scheduling sessions.
- The time of day at which some of the sessions were scheduled and held.
- The length of the sessions that prevented the fleshing out of ideas so that participants could fully crystallize them.
- Inconsistent attendance / participation occasioned by schedule conflicts.

- The brevity of sessions, which resulted in a shortchanging of the participants' exposure to, and complete understanding of ideas and concepts that were shared by the researcher/facilitator.

Despite the above noted constraints, it was heartening to observe the repeated attendance of some participants in spite of their demanding academic and personal demands, usually evidenced on a Saturday to avail themselves of what was being offered and their perception and acknowledgement of its value both present and future.

### *Academic Institution/Community Interactions*

Gude (2007) notes that “Artists create social spaces—temporary and permanent opportunities for people to connect and interact [and generate] new spaces for discourse through engaging local and dispersed communities through student artworks” (p. 13). The art classroom became that social space for the interaction between the participants and a member of the artistic community through the collaborative art project undertaken as the culminating activity of the Kingston study.

It engendered a space where all the parties could develop collaborative artworks that formed the basis for the participants to negotiate trust and participate in dialogue about issues that affected both communities. Though there was not always agreement over the issues raised, the dialogue was nonetheless productive as it generated opportunities for all of us to check our biases and the implications they bring to bear on our pedagogical practices. In her reflections on the day's activity, Shelly, the member of the artistic community, shared,

Given the depth of the discussion around one of the artworks we produced, I hope the teachers in training took note of some of the issues that arose namely: The fact that the teacher's belief system and that of the society is a natural part of the teaching environment and therefore the act of teaching and learning is never neutral (hidden, overt and missing curricula). How

much of that should be projected onto students? How do teachers manage these various paradigms along with those of students?

### **Conclusion**

#### **Negotiations of Self, Place, and Community**

The participants in this study were both practicing art teachers and teachers in training who shared in common their enrolment in the art education program at Arthur's College in Kingston, Jamaica. They also shared an interest in ways that the facilitated artmaking workshops could better equip them for their practicum experiences and their subsequent professional lives. The teacher plays a vital role in the process of place making—in allowing students to make meaning through recognition of the interconnectedness of their cumulative experiences, thereby establishing their own sense of place.

In this project I sought to use artmaking as a platform for participants to negotiate their senses of self, place and community, with expectation that their own personal experiences with this process would inform their capacity to facilitate similar processes with their students. In accordance with this ambition, the workshops focused on learning through aesthetics and the capacity to respond aesthetically, as a means of becoming more attuned to the dynamics between art teaching and art learning. The experience was also designed to promote sensitivity to the capacity of artmaking to facilitate meaningful engagement with their students.

There was significant data that reflected participant recognition and interpretation of their senses of self, place and community. These, as the findings suggest, were mainly attributable to the impact the experience had on the participants, namely, the personal and cultural connections that made the experiences meaningful for them, the use of artmaking structures or frames that allowed them to experience the activities in empowering ways, and

the relationships and routines, by which the art classroom was characterized, supporting positive self-concepts in relation to place and communities.

There were also a number of factors that limited the activities and the reflections on the experience, chiefly related to time and scheduling. Unlike the Christchurch case wherein students completed reflections right after the activities, the teacher-trainees did more verbal processing as part of each experience but waited until the end to complete written reflections. This had the disadvantage of written reflections being more rushed, and thus more descriptive and less analytical.

Nonetheless, as with any authentic teaching experience, I tried to improvise and make the most of the opportunities that were available. Despite the aforementioned constraints, the high levels of motivation as attested by the high retention rate suggest that the participants experienced strong peer and teacher relationships, and that they assigned a sense of value to the spaces where their positive experiences were garnered. Follow-up conversations with participants indicate that the experience marked them positively, and that they appropriated a number of the activities for their own practicum experiences, which were reported to have been well received by students. These reports further affirm the potential of framing artmaking in schools in the manner outlined in this project.

### **Implications for Art Teaching at the Lower Secondary Levels**

Whilst this case is site specific and therefore its results are not generalizable, the study nonetheless presents implications for strengthening the aesthetic and conceptual bases of visual arts teaching at the lower secondary education levels. The findings revealed that an emphasis on structured, open-ended artmaking experiences framed within an aesthetic perspective facilitate a space for the participants to develop personal and cultural connections to the work.

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By giving precedence to the development of healthy relationships between facilitator and participants and amongst the participants, participants in this study were inclined to establish a sense of place in the workshop. Through making bridges with the community, the participants were able to address authentic issues from a range of perspectives, allowing them to examine presumed assumptions. In concert, this facilitated a valuing of the art classroom space as a place where ‘unsafe’ ideas could be explored.

By modeling positive, targeted behaviours, such as taking on the attitude of an inquirer over that of expert, the participants were also inclined to become co-inquirers. This was evidenced in the ways participants made connections between the work executed in this project, and its potential in classroom practice at the local level.

The within-case descriptions and analysis of the Kingston case study were presented in this chapter. Chapter Six will address the cross-case analysis of this and the preceding empirical study, and provide implications and recommendations for the field of visual arts education based on these results.

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### **SECTION THREE: CONCLUSIONS**

## Chapter Six

### Closing Re-Marks: Conclusion and Recommendations

*I am interested in understanding... the BIG PICTURE*

#### Introduction

In this final chapter, I weave together the threads of this a/r/tographic investigation inquiring into artmaking strategies that support the development and interpretation of senses of self, place and community, located in a secondary school in Christchurch, New Zealand, and a tertiary institution in Kingston, Jamaica. Chapter One introduced the research aims and motivation, provided a background to the study, and highlighted its perceived importance and professional significance to the development of the field of art education. Chapter Two mapped the research terrain and paradigms, addressing the rationale for the choice of research methods employed in the study, and describing these methods and their associated boundaries.

Chapter Three contextualized the research problem by laying the theoretical frameworks that grounded it. The two subsequent chapters, Four and Five, presented the a/r/tographic dimension of this research. They provided thick descriptions of facilitated artmaking processes with secondary students in Christchurch and tertiary teacher-trainees in Kingston, aimed at answering the main research question: How can visual arts teachers use artmaking to help adolescent students to recognize, critically analyse and interpret their senses of self, place and community?

Chapter Six provides the closing re-marks to this investigation. Specifically, it anchors the findings from the contrasting cases in the literature, to highlight the emergent meanings, provoke a set a wonderings, and offer recommendations for future research.



### **Re-Marking Places**

As discussed in the introductory chapter, this study leans on the assumption that “All individuals are already situated in place, and it is through our spatial and temporal experiences in places that we define, at least in part, who we are...” (Cravey & Petit, 2012, p. 101). This chapter delineates the ways that students and teachers at the two research sites negotiated their senses of self, place and community, and teases out the “compelling uniqueness” that their contrasts contributed to the endeavor (Stake, 2000). In accordance, it does not aim to offer a comparative analysis of both cases but instead presents a palimpsest of the new understandings and further questions provoked by the inquiry.

### **How is this Thesis Re-Markable?**

At the outset of the thesis I presented perspectives related to the position and interpretation of the arts held within the New Zealand Curriculum and the R.O.S. E. Curriculum. These perspectives were primarily centered on the works of Smith (2007) and Hill (2006). In response to these and other marks on the field of visual arts education, this thesis offers some re-marks. The term re-marks conjures the palimpsestic quality of layering new insights on top of previous ones in ways that entangle the past and present into an unfolding and relational discourse. What were the re-marks presented in this research?

At the research sites, I endeavoured to facilitate inquiry that would lead participants to seek out personal and cultural connections to curriculum. This essential component overlaid the strictly academic focus of curricula. Hence, the research provides an expanded conception of curriculum, wherein students utilize their senses of self, place, and community as the locus from which they engage with artmaking and meaning making, thus situating themselves within the wider world.

Whilst emphases on self, place and community to frame visual arts education are not new (Ball & Lai, 2006; Daniel, 2003; Gude, 2007; Somerville et al., 2011; Walker, 2001), the contribution of this thesis lies in the examination of the meanings that both students and teachers ascribe, to them to facilitate a multidimensional view of the potential of this strategy for learning. Also implicated in this multidimensionality, was my role as a/r/tographer. This perspective offered a unique vantage point from which to process the complementarity of these positions. Literature on a/r/tography promotes four commitments: enquiry, a way of being in the world, negotiating personal engagement in a community of belonging, and creating practices that trouble and address difference (Irwin, 2004). These commitments were met at the research sites.

In accordance, the art classroom at the Christchurch site was explored for its potential as a “complex text” (Carpenter, 2003, p. 15), to reference and embed the multiple texts of the students’ lives, and to answer the main research question. Similarly, artmaking at the Kingston site was examined for its capacity to assist teacher-trainees toward “becoming pedagogical” (Irwin, 2013, p. 203), to the concerns of the research endeavour. With respect to the teacher-trainees’ position, Irwin’s (2004) assertion that, “the more [they] attend to how [they] perceive curriculum and pedagogy, the more capacity [they] have to experience the aesthetics of curriculum and pedagogy,” applies (p. 45).

In relation to this research, I would add to Irwin’s position that the development of such habits of perception will also serve to better equip teacher-trainees to assist students in the negotiation and interpretation of their senses of self, place, and community through artmaking. As was discussed in detail in Chapter Three, such forms of negotiation necessarily implicate place, since “nothing we do is unplaced” (Casey, 1993, p. ix).

At each of the research sites, the data aligned with the following themes:

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- The Intersection of Sites and Sights as Meaningful and Critical Engagement
- The Capacities Held in Artmaking to Produce Place-making
- Negotiations between Strangeness and Familiarity
- Art Classrooms as Safe Places to Wrestle with “Unsafe” Ideas

These are discussed more fully below.

### **The Intersection of Sites and Sights as Meaningful and Critical Engagement**

The artmaking experiences in this study were purposively designed to facilitate the intersection of sites and sights. Sites were interpreted as both physical locations and a “territory of meanings” (Relph, 1993, p. 36), and included the art classroom, the wider school, and the students' communities beyond the school. This broadened concept of the term also encompassed locations accessed emotionally, spiritually, historically, virtually, locally, regionally and globally, to enrich the experiences within the physical classroom space. These locations carried national, cultural, linguistic, aesthetic, collective and personal histories, and, as such, conferred a variety of perspectives on particular issues.

Sights, on the other hand, involved the visual culture that surrounded, informed and challenged the aforementioned sites, as well as the artefacts produced in relation to the research endeavour. These included the visual imagery with which the students were familiar from their life worlds, the visual displays within the art department and the school at large, the visual exemplars presented to them for exploration (including my personal artworks), and the very artworks that they produced. Together these constituted a portrait of the “culture” of the experience. Wilson (2003) unpacks the contiguities inherent in this portrait by revealing:

In contemporary visual culture images are like an enormous patch of grass, continually spreading by sending out new shoots, new roots, and by broadcasting seeds. The images not only come to rest momentarily alongside one another, they interweave and fuse, producing endless

variations. Every image...carries with it the residue of other images. But this is not all; every image, it seems, may be related to any other image, any other text, any other idea through our interpretations. (p. 122)

In palimpsestic ways then, the meanings of the sights were also dependent on the sites that informed them. These were sometimes layered, and at other times juxtaposed, but always in relation to one another. Layered on top of the participants' sites and sights were my own, adding the dimensionality of the collision of our worlds in these shared experiences. Consequently, there was nothing linear about the experience. It accommodated constant shifts inter-sites (students' life worlds and the art class), intra-sites (previous and present classroom approaches to artmaking) and across the different sites and sights (students' varied experiences and their ways of visualising them).

The emergent space where they met offered something new. This "new" thing is what this section seeks to uncover. It finds synchronicity with Bhabha's (1990) explanation of the process of cultural hybridity where, "something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation" arises (p. 211).

The HOD provided an example that describes this intersection of sites and sights at the Christchurch site. She noted that this course "has taught these students analytical skills in order to be able to discuss and evaluate their own position within their personal and wider community" (Neila). This is also supported by Nana's reflection of the experience: "It was really interesting. It like allowed your imagination to take you to places, learning about other cultures and their beauties." Nana, a student of Asian heritage, was appreciative of the connections that she was able to make in her own art and she used the opportunity to weave different aspects of her identity together. For example, in one of the exercises she incorporated Chinese characters into her work to extend its meaning. Through other students' works and the art exemplars presented, she and other participants had opportunities to learn

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about aspects of other cultures, thus conveying positive value to those cultural aspects of their own personal identities. These aspects could then be actively and productively employed in their meaning-making through artmaking.

The students were able to make these site/sight connections but were more limited in terms of the depth with which they unpacked the works. This is interpreted as being reflective of their minimal comparable experiences. Since this way of thinking about artmaking was new, they needed more time to become comfortable with this process and to extend their artistic vocabularies, since “the more we create, the more we see. The more we see, the more we appreciate and understand” (Irwin, 2004, p. 45). Extensive scaffolding and emphasis on the personal helped to facilitate this bridging.

In the Kingston case, the intersection was evidenced in more direct ways. The participants readily made connections across the site-sight spectrum, citing instances of their experiences in particular places. For example, in the culminating activity, they referenced authentic and contestable issues and tied them to dominant ideologies of place. This was evidenced in Derrick’s reaction to a question about whether he knew the association that a particular symbolism used in his work evoked. He said, “A Jamaica mi live enuh!” (I live in Jamaica, you know!) Through this statement, he was asserting that within places and communities there are particular understandings and his membership in the Jamaican community made him privy to those associations.

Put another way, Casey reflected on how the intersection could manifest at the classroom level. She said,

In the second class, what you were teaching us about place-based education, that helps you to be more aware that the environment is there and that there are things that you can use because you never actually go out there and say this can be done with this and that it’s coming from way back

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then. Like, we're teaching them about textures from the tree bark and instead of taking them to the tree, we show them pictures in a book when they could actually go out there and see it.

Casey was increasingly becoming conscious of the opportunity to utilize available natural resources to make learning more interactive and authentic. When she said, "this can be done" and "that it's coming from way back then," she was also acknowledging that historical value is embedded in traditions that we employ, and that such forms of contextualization serve to enrich the creative process. The reflection by the HOD may also be interpreted as confirmation of this nexus. She stated,

The pedagogical model (Place-Based Education) which guided the research of which these workshops formed a part, provided an effective means through which the practical, utilitarian purposes of the subject could be expanded and personalized, by linking them with larger ideas about art as a discipline, and with the universally relevant concepts of self-identity and the integration into it of community and place (Personal communication, Natalie, February, 2013).

### **Negotiations between Strangeness and Familiarity**

This section discusses aspects of both research sites that include instances where negotiations were made between the strange and the familiar. Some of these instances center on particular aspects of conceptualizing the artmaking such as product- or process orientations, others are more philosophical and practical, such as researcher expectations and the realities that framed the research encounter.

#### ***Product vs Process***

Many visual arts teachers at the lower secondary levels emphasize the art product, and assign less importance to student understandings of the artmaking the process. Speaking of

this practice, Gude (2000) noted, “Curricula that stress art history that ends with cubism; visual elements and principles; and color wheels, technical skills, and other aspects of art production are already over half a century out-of-date” (p. 76). Gude was not disputing the importance of formal and technical knowledge for as Anderson (2004) reminds us, “However important the content, art relies on skilled execution in a medium, an intrinsic aesthetic task, to stand as art” (p. 32).

Gude (2000) was, however, critiquing the outdated view of art that such curriculum advances, a curriculum devoid of connection to contemporary art and culture. This practice reinforces the view that there are singular ways to approach artmaking, in stark contrast to the fact that nothing is considered foundational in postmodern discourse. Accordingly, in order to reflect contemporary concerns that have import for student understandings of the world, artmaking should entail more than the acquisition of skills. Elsewhere, she concurs:

The essential contribution that arts education can make to our students and to our communities is to teach skills and concepts while creating opportunities to investigate and represent one's own experiences—generating personal and shared meaning. Quality arts curriculum is thus rooted in belief in the transformative power of art and critical inquiry (Gude, 2007, p. 6).

The process/product debate is a longstanding one, and may best be understood against the backdrop of essentialism versus contextualism. The essentialist position claims a personal and psychological motivation for creating art. Art and artmaking hold intrinsic value and thus engagement with art is “for art’s sake.” Within the essentialist realm, the principles and elements of design, along with skillful composition and execution of technique, constitute the language of art. The leaning toward “product” therefore sits well within this conception of art. Contextualists, on the other hand, believe that art’s purpose is broader than the work of art itself, and should communicate something about the culture that it represents. Its meaning

is therefore dependent on and constituted by the context in which it was made, and that it serves supporting the “process” orientation to artmaking.

Anderson (2004), however, argues that these frames for viewing art need not be seen as binaries for:

...it seems all art is functional (contextualist) even if that means simply carrying aesthetic pleasure in its forms. Moreover, all art also by its nature is an expressive form, (an essentialist quality), skillfully crafted to be at one with the content it carries. It is when the essentialist and contextualist purposes of art making are both consciously enjoined that art fulfills its true potential in school or life. That potential lies in the making of meaning. (p. 32)

In concert with Anderson’s (2004) view, the exercises pursued in both case studies emphasize complementarity between the artistic product and the artmaking process. Across the cases, the exercises and processes were relatively similar, only adapted to suit the varied needs of the participants and the contexts. The participants processed the meanings in their artworks through a variety of mediums, including reflective sheets, visual journals, class critiques, and performance-related activities.

Students at the Christchurch site responded to this approach in varied ways. Many of them came to the experience with a concept of art being primarily concerned with skillfully executing a product, such as a drawing or a painting. Alya’s reflection of the collective experience might be interpreted as evidence of this. She said, “I liked doing the painting. I liked where you took a photo of yourself and then drew it because it was cool drawing things that were like completely accurate.” When asked about what she enjoyed the least, she noted, “When we did like talking or where we did the activities that weren’t like creative...you know where we had to watch things and act things out and stuff, it wasn’t as fun as like, you know when we did actually do art stuff.” Lexy, another participant, offered a different view



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by saying that she liked the fact that “they [the assignments] all represented what we think; not what other people thought.” She nonetheless added, “Sometimes it’s easier to just be told, do this! Like, do a flower.”

Other students offered different perspectives of the experience. Keegan for example, stated, “Well it was all good. I found it fun and easy to understand. Yeah...it was just really fun!” Elaborating a bit more on the experience, Roswin stated,

We had a lot of freedom! And a lot to say! I think it’s been a really enjoyable time and Ms. Barrett has taught (sic) me to look at things differently than how I would have usually looked at them. And she has explained in detail, into such depth that it’s opened my eyes so much.

An external view of the experience from the HOD confirmed the dichotomy identified above. She noted,

This programme has been a challenge for some of the students as they have not had to deal with these concepts in such a meaningful way before... Trudy-Ann has successfully used self-evaluation techniques we would not normally use until senior years. For example, the students made pictorial and conceptual links between their bodies of work (Personal Communication, Neila, December, 2012).

To facilitate the links to which Neila referred, I used a lot of scaffolding with artist exemplars, demonstrations that occasionally included personal artworks, examples from pop culture, and background information on artist models. Questioning was also used as a strategy to facilitate student engagement with a topic, and to further provoke questions to guide their analyses of their own and others’ artworks.

The trainees, on the other hand, were also emergent artists, in concert with the department’s philosophy that recognizes good art teachers as equally good artists, and, as

such, it was easier for them to open up to all aspects of the artmaking experience. However, there were instances where the generative tension between process and product were evidenced. Reflecting on the improvisation project, where the trainees responded aesthetically to a series of artmaking commands<sup>25</sup> to develop a work of art, and where, the sequencing of the commands was not foreknown, Casey stated,

I learnt how to be free and just work. However in all of that freedom I had to be conscious that I should still consider design elements. I got attached to the work and was afraid to make changes. I will have to find creative ways to encourage students to do their artwork—those that may become attached to their artwork.

In response to the same project, Lisa stated, “I really enjoyed working spontaneously. Probably if I was given more time to do the work I would try to perfect it because of how I think now and what I have practiced.” Both responses demonstrate the tensions between surrender and control that align with process and product perspectives. George identified a further tension, by saying,

I found the work to be fun and exciting to do. In doing the work some of the times I wondered what was going to be next to do to the work. The part that I found to be intimidating was when we exchanged each other’s work and had to make a mark on the work. Doing this I constantly looked at the person as I made a mark wondering what the person might say.

George’s response reflects Gude’s (2000) assertion that the hidden curriculum of many art programs promotes an understanding of art as a product of “individual genius...rather than a kind of cultural production involving complex interactions among numbers of people” (p. 79). Given the emphasis on plural meanings in postmodern discourse,

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<sup>25</sup> Artmaking commands refer to specific tasks that the teacher-trainees and I wrote separately on paper and placed in a bag from which they randomly drew a task. The group, in turn, interpreted these tasks in their own unique ways to develop an artwork. As individual tasks became absorbed into collective ones, a dynamic and participatory space opened up for the individuals involved to interact and share meanings. This activity was inspired by Oliver Herring’s TASK project.

this was another facilitated way of helping the trainees develop an appreciation of the ways that some contemporary artists and their audience co-construct artworks and their meanings.

### ***Expectations vs Realities***

#### *Time*

Harking back to the hongī experience referenced earlier, there are always expectations when one enters a relationship with another, and these are largely shaped by our personal experiences. Based on these, we might enter experiences timidly or adventurously. Whatever the approach, challenges may arise when a member of one culture interacts with or interprets the actions of a member of another culture. Fittingly, Chiseri-Strater (1996) reminds us that, “All researchers are positioned whether they write about it explicitly, separately, or not at all” (p. 115).

I entered this research experience as an experienced secondary school teacher who worked in both single-sex and co-educational institutions. I also hold a sense of my own capacity to develop meaningful relationships with students. In addition, I entered the experience having trained teachers to occupy positions as visual arts teachers in secondary schools, and so had a good idea of what it was like to interact with students who were the ages of the participants at the Christchurch site.

What was new, however, was the cultural and geographic locatedness of this experience. For example, though the participants and I shared a common language—the English language—our speech carried the different rhythms and sounds of our respective homelands. By extension, words carried different weights or meanings, and, as such, my interactions with students involved an ongoing process of negotiation. One of the major forms of negotiation throughout the artmaking process was adherence to timelines. With frequent adjustments made to the lessons in order to effectively manage the timeframes for

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both projects, it was often necessary to prioritize quality over quantity.

Despite the fairly relaxed approach I brought to the experience, I was very mindful that adequate time is essential to the success of the artmaking experience. Having come from an educational situation where the scheduling of art classes was limited and limiting, I understood the importance of maximizing opportunities within a constrained timeframe. In my previous role as a secondary school teacher, I only saw my visual arts students once per week and therefore assignments that were not completed within class were expected to be finished outside of class, and in time for the next session.

The Christchurch site, however, took what I perceived to be as a casual approach to the completion of assignments. This was exhibited in the departmental policy that did not require students to do homework for art classes. Whilst this situation may have been justifiable given that my contact with the students alternated between two and three times per week, the policy was reportedly in place because students could not be relied on to return the work in a satisfactory state. This required adjustment on my part, and limited the extent to which the concepts in the lesson might be explored, thus decreasing potential contributions to the research. The intervention of school related interruptions further impacted the work, resulting in less exploration taking place with the exercises scheduled toward the end of the study.

Likewise, timing also proved challenging in the Kingston case. When the research project was introduced to the members of the art education department, though several of them expressed an interest in participating in the project, only three signatures were secured by the end of the school term. This resulted in a delay in the start date for the project so that scheduling issues could be resolved, to allow for the inclusion of students across cohorts. While this strategy did provide what the department head referred to as a “healthy” number

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of participants, the more complex scheduling resulted in the need for some sessions to take place late in the evening and on Saturday morning.

These factors meant that initial plans for the workshops had to be adjusted, in instances, to accommodate the workshop space or to ensure that the participants could engage in the workshops without feeling overwhelmed. The more performance-based activities worked well for these occasions. This reality was confirmed by Teri who remarked that, “even though we were tired like crazy we still came to the classes.” Lisa, similarly expressed:

I am particularly pleased with the thought that was put into it to make it fun and very interactive. If it was just a lecture every day I know I would be distracted at times. The content and the exercise each day was very stimulating and I learnt a lot. Workshops like these should happen more often, especially for us as art educators.

As a consequence, though the participants engaged with the material and exercises in meaningful, personally and culturally relevant ways, on occasions the discussions did not achieve the depth that they might have. The final reflections at the end of the workshop were an example of this. With trainees already strained by having to accommodate the workshops in addition to their regular schedules, they had asked to do one final reflection at the end of the period in lieu of several shorter reflections over the course of the work. Some of these were done at the last minute and as such, were more summations of the experience than critical examinations of it.

### *Community Collaboration*

The other major form of negotiation had to do with organizing a collaborative project between the participants and members outside of the school community. Going into the Christchurch project, I was aware that a number of challenges would accompany this effort,

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but I misjudged how challenging the logistics of getting the community to participate in the project would be. The HOD concurred, “Trudy-Ann underestimated how much time this group would need to complete tasks. As a result, the final piece which involved liaison between the class and the public was not given the time it deserved” (Workshop Evaluation, Neila, December, 2012).

As an outsider to the school culture, I underestimated the time and complexity of obtaining necessary support and approval for the collaboration. For example, in spite of the fact that the information sheets provided to the parents and guardians outlined the collaboration as one of the major intentions of the project, further supportive action was needed to prepare for and support their participation. Working closer with the HOD to enlist her help in facilitating these negotiations might have served the initiative better.

Direct communication with parents, guardians or potential community participants might also have served to facilitate their inclusion in the project. Particularly given that I was an outsider conducting research with the school community, it was especially important that the relationship have a personal quality. I had relied on the students to pass on the information sheets and consent forms to the community or family members that they chose to interview. Many of the students said they conducted the interviews, but could not locate the document. Consequently, there were three participants who returned the interview sheets. In retrospect, I wonder if this was partially due to their limited understanding of the worth of this experience.

In a discussion with the HOD toward the end of the project, she had lamented the fact that this aspect of the project did not come to fruition. While the original research plan had calculated potential to inform understandings about the inquiry, the inquiry included a foundational aspiration to inform the practical implementation of the experience of the visual arts classroom. These in-the-field encounters, in their own way, serve to inform

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understandings of what is possible in this setting. The learning is that the time required to engage in such experiences can never be underestimated, particularly if the experience sits outside of the realm of the typical culture of the art classroom.

At the Kingston site, given the time constraints, I contacted a community member personally. Based on her capacity as an artist, instrumentality in developing visual arts initiatives nationwide, and history of close working relations with teachers of the visual arts, she was invited to participate in the study. The match proved to be very effective, as participant contributions were acknowledged and respected, even when representing vastly differing vantage points. At the conclusion of the project, the participants and the community member discussed the prospect of further encounters.

### **The Capacities Held in Artmaking to Produce Place-making**

Anderson (2004) poses the questions: “Why do people make art? And why should we teach students to make it?” (p. 31) He offers the same response as that of many art educators: it is a meaning-making endeavor (Walker, 2001). In the context of this study, I sought to understand the meanings that were inherent in not only the works that the students produced, but also the meanings embedded in the event of producing those works. These concerns served as the bases for understanding the way this process could further render the students’ interpretations of their senses of self, place, and community visible. In this segment, I am particularly interested in the ways that characteristics of the artmaking experience translate as place-making.

The term artmaking generally refers to the various components involved in the production of art. It is a composite of elements such as structure, intention, design, improvisation and modification. More specifically, it weaves together ideas and concepts, artist models, materials, media and technologies, thoughts, feelings and experiences, personal

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connections, the artist's inspiration, philosophy, intention and stylistic innovations into a whole that we call art. The tapestry woven from these elements serves to demonstrate that art does not exist in a vacuum and involves more than executing a skill in order for it to be meaningful. Given that it is fuelled by such complexity, artmaking is not formulaic; it varies according to the conditions under which it is implemented and with the individuals and groups that participate in it.

This located aspect of the artmaking process is an important bridge that allows the event of artmaking to also function as a place-making endeavour. In the same way that effective artmaking centers on the participants, place-making is developed around the people who inhabit a place. It has at its center, their interests, aspirations and needs. This is because "place also depends on who is there. When the people change, the place changes" (Ellis 2005, p. 64). In accordance, the relationships amongst the participants at the two sites in this research helped to shape the values that they assigned to the art classroom as a place.

As teacher/facilitator, it was my responsibility to help create a secure environment where the participants felt free to be themselves, and to express their ideas, aspirations and stories, without fear that their contributions would be taken for granted or ridiculed. And, given that art was mandatory for the Christchurch student participants, and further, that they alternated between two and three hours of art per week, it was integral to this research study to consider how the time spent in the art classroom enabled or constrained place-making possibilities. Those two to three hours of art constitute a significant part of the students' everyday lives. Eyles (1989) *in* Ellis, 2005, explains that:

Everyday life is... a taken-for-granted reality which provides the unquestioned background of meaning for the individual. It is a social construction which becomes a structure itself. Thus through our actions in everyday life we build, maintain and reconstruct the very definition. ... We



both create and are created by society and these processes are played out within the context of everyday life. ... From it we derive a sense of self, identity, as living a real and meaningful biography. (p. 62)

Accordingly, by virtue of the confidence students acquired through familiar routines, through getting to know their peers, and through developing an intimate knowledge of the course experience, opportunities existed for them to establish a sense of place. Literature on sense of place indicates that it is difficult to define due to its intangibility (Relph, 1976; Stedman, 2003). What is generally agreed upon however is that a sense of place denotes the quality of the relationship that people share with places, and that it supports the development of a sense of self and a sense of community. Hay (1988) identifies sense of place as providing “a locus” that facilitates notions of insideness and community (p. 163). Elsewhere, Kwon’s (1998, 2002) theoretical framework identifies dimensions of sense of place as originality, authenticity, uniqueness, significance, and authorship” (in Ransdell, 2013, p. 2)

As at the Christchurch site, the art classroom at the Kingston site also formed a significant backdrop for the possibilities participants were able to imagine for themselves, as well as similar potential for place-making. The burden for productive outcomes was arguably greater in this context given that the artmaking happened outside of the structured time for such events, and participants were not receiving credit for their involvement in the project. Consequently, I endeavoured to ensure that the resources and activities reflected the realities of the context, were responsive to the students’ biographies, facilitated a variety of perspectives, and encompassed a range of skill levels to sustain their interest and active engagement with the project.

In taking a constructivist approach to the artmaking process, wherein participants are viewed as co-constructors of knowledge, I was therefore centering the experience around their needs, a crucial element in the place-making equation. This implicated and honoured the

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participants' contributions, and consequently, facilitated the personalization of the art classroom. However, place-making doesn't depend only on the teacher's contributions. The more the students saw themselves as contributors to the soul of the art classroom, the more this place became, and the more they became. Freire (1996) said it best when he said:

People as beings "in a situation," find themselves rooted in temporal-spatial conditions which mark them and which they also mark. They will tend to reflect upon their own "situationality" to the extent that they are challenged by it to act upon it. Human beings are because they are in a situation. And they will be more the more they not only critically reflect upon their existence but critically act upon it (p. 90).

The students at the Christchurch site demonstrated ownership of the experience in a range of ways, including the personalization of the artworks. Megha's signification of what was important in her religion through her papercut artwork grew out of this potential. It was also exhibited when Roswin revealed that her self-portrait reflected her coming to terms with her dual self, and when Horace decided that though the artmaking boundary stipulated the use of only black and white, he needed to include the colour red to fully convey his philosophical ideas.

More specifically, Tash mentioned that what she valued about the experience was, "you got to explore your imagination and see what you can create. And it was fun to work in a group." Roswin, on the other hand, who seemed easily distracted at the start of the project, later became engrossed in the experience to the extent that she often led group activities and discussions. She had this to say: "you make me want to become a teacher." "From the students' responses it may also be construed that they found the experience to be nurturing. The HOD endorsed this when she said,

Trudy-Ann is a passionate teacher whose integrity is strongly felt in her delivery and presence in the classroom. She has a genuine interest in the

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students, in their ideas, responses, and experience, and structures the learning around their contribution. She has brought to my attention how timid, un-tactile and cold many New Zealand teachers (and people) are in their relating to students and their colleagues. Her style has reinforced the approach we take to our students in our department.

This sense of place dimension was also evident at the Kingston site in the way that the participants openly discussed “unsafe” ideas. This was particularly so given my and the community member’s outsider status. This suggests a level of comfort with the place and the people there. Additionally, the strong sense of community witnessed amongst the participants, and their commitment to the project in spite of their workload/scheduling issues suggests that they had achieved a sense of insideness, a locus and center from which to operate. In reciprocal ways, they assigned value to the place of the art classroom and counted it as one of the significant aspects of their teacher candidacy experience.

Commonality was found between the experience shared above and the Christchurch experience that may be captured through another reflection by the head of department. She shared:

At first Trudy-Ann's expectation of student participation in the class room discussions and presentations was a real challenge for the students. New Zealanders are not encouraged to be theatrical and outgoing in any environment let alone an academic one. But as they grew to trust and understand the purpose of the tasks I saw even the shyest students extend themselves in terms of their presence in the classroom (Workshop Evaluation, Neila, December, 2012).

### ***Epiphanies***

There were other indicators of the evolving relationships to the work, to the process, and to me over the course of the project that affirmed Neila’s assessment. For example, one

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student voluntarily remained in class during the lunch period to finish an assignment and two other students requested to take their assignments home to complete them. There were also others that materialized as epiphanies. I will describe the two that carried the most import for me.

The first epiphany was experienced as I was sorting and scanning some of the entries from the student journals, subsequent to the completion of the project. One work in particular caused me to pause, when I noticed that an unfamiliar form of text was prominently featured in the student's working drawing. I asked a Chinese colleague to translate the writing, since the student had previously identified as Chinese. He informed me that the language was Korean, and so I asked a Korean colleague for translation. As she deciphered the writing, I was reminded of the tableau this student and her group had created representing community metaphorically as a river. The details noted in her Korean writing matched the tableau that the group had enacted.

This raised a number of questions for me: Why had she processed her ideas in Korean, when she had only identified herself as Chinese? Given that she had also demonstrated proficiency in written and spoken English, what additional value did the Korean language offer in framing the experience? The potential for sense of place to be detected through language usage is a recommended area for future research.

Another major indication of the relationships resulting from the project, which Neila addressed earlier, was witnessed on the final day when some of the participants voluntarily gave up their designated free time to complete their mural project. When I questioned the motivation for staying behind, Dan in a simple but profound way stated, "I'd much prefer to be in art class." The capacity for culturally responsive, place-based visual arts education to engage students to such an extent that their commitment to the work extends beyond the containment of the class itself, was exhibited on multiple occasions across the research sites,

and thus constitutes a major finding of this research.

The situation above finds alignment with Feld & Basso's (1996) assertion that sense of place has less to do with where it comes from and how it is achieved and more to do with what it is made with. They posit:

“As vibrantly felt as it is vividly imagined, sense of place asserts itself at varying levels of mental and emotional intensity. Whether lived in memory or experienced on the spot, the strength of its impact is commensurate with the richness of its contents, with the range and diversity of symbolic associations that swim within its reach and move it on its course. In its more ordinary moments, As Seamus Heaney (1980) has observed, sense of place stays within the sphere of its own familiar attractions, prompting individuals to dwell on themselves in terms of themselves, as private persons with private lives to ponder. But in its fuller manifestations this separatist stance gives way to thoughts of membership in social groups, of participation in activities that transcend the concerns of particular people, of close involvements with whole communities and their enduring historical traditions.” (p. 85)

Drawing on Feld & Basso (1996), if sense of place “in its fuller manifestations” contributes to a sense of community, it might also be said that the examples provided demonstrate this capacity. It might further be construed that when artmaking facilitates meaningful connections, and provides opportunities for participants to use space authentically, it participates in the ongoing dynamic of a sense of place, which is integral to place-making.

### **Art Classrooms as Safe Places to Wrestle with “Unsafe” Ideas**

The art classroom is one of the main sites where students' emotional capacities may be nurtured. For this reason, art education is often justified for its capacity to help students make sense of themselves in relation to their worlds. The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum, for

example, provides the justification that, “The visual arts comprise a broad range of conceptual, material, and dimensional forms through which we communicate, learn about ourselves, and make meaning of the world” (p. 70). On the other hand, the Design Arts module of the Research and Technology curriculum (for grades 7-9), used in secondary schools throughout Jamaica, emphasizes equipping students to creatively and innovatively use resources and technologies to solve practical problems.

But these questions remain: What are the conditions of the artroom that facilitate the creation of bridges between the curriculum and intended objectives? How might the conditions of the place of the artroom contribute and support student negotiations of their identities? Cognizant of the fact that the environment communicates volumes in terms of how students are viewed and what they may aspire toward (Cohen & Trostle, 1990), I endeavoured to create opportunities for the students to exercise autonomy as a means of helping them discover the value of their input. Though the activities were structured, their designs were open ended, to accommodate a variety of interpretations serving to affirm that there are multiple possible correct solutions to any problem. This is in direct conflict with much current art instructional practice that focuses solely on formal and technical concerns. Such approaches promote what Gude (2004), in *Rubric for a Quality Curriculum* refers to as “a hierarchy of the talented” (para 30).

Consequently, assignments were multifaceted to support students’ varied strengths. Students had the power of choice in applying various interpretations, which also provided them with the autonomy to govern their artistic journeys. And through introducing new and varied methods and techniques that were student friendly but nonetheless challenged the students, opportunities were created for disequilibrium, which led students to adapt the tasks in new and creative ways. This feature of the experience also engaged their interests and facilitated a space where exploration became commonplace.

By virtue of the emphasis on facilitating personal and cultural connections to the artworks that the participants at both sites produced, a space was created where participants felt safe to exercise their judgments in a way that respected the opinions of others. Chawla's (1992) study on children's place attachment carries import for this study. She suggests that three types of satisfaction are achieved through place: security, social affiliation, and creative expression and exploration. Each of these was evident at both research sites. She posited also that place supports the development of self-identity through affording opportunities for unprogrammed space—a space “where adolescents can test new social relationships and ideas” (p. 69).

Within both research contexts, the collaborative space to develop ideas for the collage, tableau, and mural offered this type of space. In the Kingston case, unprogrammed space allowed trainees to become acquainted with each other, as we ate and shared together. The snacks provided after every workshop represented a nurturing context that proved valuable in helping the participants to develop relationships with their peers and me, and these relationships served to support the artmaking process.

In respect to the capacity of the art classroom as a place to test relationships and ideas, the collaborative art project in Kingston contributed meaningful data. The depth of the discussion raised critical questions about the role of contemporary art pedagogy, and prompted this response from the community participant:

How can we discuss sensitive and divisive societal issues in the classroom? What are the boundaries for teachers in relation to the overarching goals of the education system and the societal structure and beliefs especially when these particular issues are coming the fore ever so often and at some point must be dealt with if only to have discourse about it? This is an issue for the multicultural space and classroom which Jamaica has not escaped from because there are a greater number of

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nationalities and identities to contend with in our society although we are still pretending to be a homogenous state (Personal communication, Shelly, March 2013).

Shelly's questions provide implications for future research into the ways that sensitive societal issues are addressed through visual arts education in secondary schools in Jamaica.



## **Conclusion**

There is a paucity of research on secondary visual arts education in Jamaica, and Hill's (2006) investigation highlights important implications of this gap. She alludes to the disparity between the curriculum in schools and the realities of the school setting, which I referred to at length in the introduction to this thesis, from the vantage point of the teacher educator. Hill also raised the need to address the top-down model of teacher education programs in developing capacity, a point extended by Perraton (2000), when he adds that "not only in technical skills but also in reflecting on their own work and in gaining the inclination and skills to analyze what they are doing in terms of its effect upon children"(in Hill, 2006, p. 208). In New Zealand, Smith's (2007) thesis similarly suggests, "theoretical and pedagogical knowledge and understandings, and their practical application require recognition and provision in both pre-service and continuing education of art teachers" (p. 264). This thesis seeks to contribute to this potential.

The conceptual framework below (Fig. 75) serves to clarify this potential. As discussed in Chapter Three, it weaves together pedagogical practices, concepts and theories that underpin this study. The framework is cyclical to represent the organic nature of the understandings and outputs. In it the elements are layered and juxtaposed to demonstrate how the different facets are always in relation, and that they should be understood as being interdependent. The frames are both visual- and place-oriented, and are centered on the three key strands that the research sought to investigate: self, place and community. Artmaking provided the anchor for each of these.

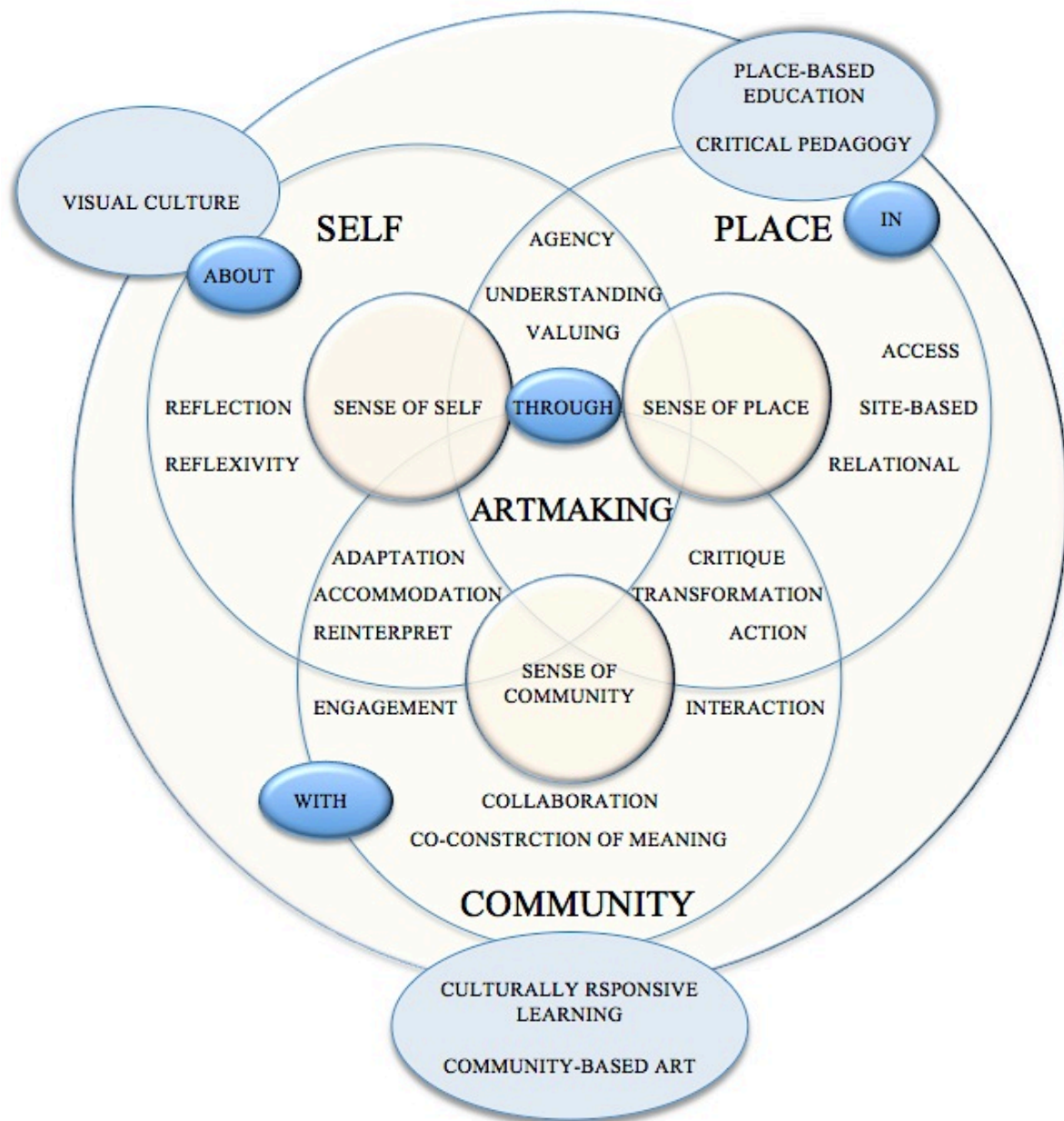


Figure 75 Conceptual Framework of this Study

Within the visual and place frames adopted by this project, there were three facets that determined interests and outputs: visualization, negotiation and collaboration (see Fig. 74). Visualization was the chief component within the model as the visual constituted the primary data. It refers to the act or process of interpreting in visual terms or putting in visual form. Accordingly, this concerned the understandings held by participants of the cultural

significance of images, and the ways in which they visually negotiated their senses of self, place, and community. A recall of the main research question helps to focus this analysis.

The research has focused on the inquiry: How can visual arts teachers use artmaking to help adolescent students to recognize, critically analyze, and interpret their senses of self, place, and community? Within the context of this question, this first component addresses the recognition constituent in notions of self, in relation to place and community, and incorporates elements of reflection and reflexivity, such as naming, describing, acknowledging, and perceiving, as the means toward this end. Working drawings and completed artworks provided the mediums through which this visualization aspect was actualized.

The second component concerned negotiation. In the context of this study refers to the process of transferral of ideas and understandings and the trade of forms between the place of the art classroom, the wider school community, their lifeworlds and the sites they access emotionally, spiritually, virtually and otherwise. This component was rooted in the critical analysis aspect of the main research question, and leaned on models of critical pedagogy of place and place-based education for signification. Decolonization and reinhabitation are central to these scholarships. According to Gruenewald (2003a), decolonization has to do with “learning to recognize disruption and injury and to address their causes” (p. 9). The reinhabitation aspect is central to place-based education is the concept of re-inhabitation which concerns learning to live-in-place in an area that has been disrupted and injured through past exploitation (Gruenewald, 2003a; Somerville 2011).

In this project, this was interpreted as learning to recognize and analyze practices and conditions from visual culture and ideologies within place that impact undertakings in the art classroom, and beginning to use the artmaking process to unpack those linkages. These incorporated notions of access, were site-based and emphasized relationality by bridging sites

and sights.

In the philosophy project in Kingston, for example, the lack of ethnic diversity in the group of philosophers offered for discussion, provided significant grounds for critically analyzing the hidden curriculum of schools. The *Schooling the World* and the *Not Another Brick Wall* videos also supplemented these discussions, and helped us to analyze the dominant practices within schooling that promote conformity and economic interests over the sustainability of the cultures of places. Likewise, the community project also raised “othering” and “normalizing” practices and their implications for classroom practice. These activities served to raise awareness and sensitivity of the teacher-trainees to the selection of content and the enactment of pedagogy, to ensure culturally responsive pedagogical practice. At the Christchurch site, critical analysis of contemporary events was largely supported by student exploration of the ideas and concerns that contemporary artists address, and considering the relationship of these ideas to their own lives.

Thirdly, there was a collaboration component to the project that aimed to address the interpretation component of the main research question. It emphasized the co-construction of meaning and knowledge. This aspect leaned upon culturally responsive pedagogical practices as well as community-based art practices, which emphasize the facilitation of authentic engagement and that responds to the participants cultural experiences, in ways that honour their contributions. Accordingly, this component called on students collaboratively to clarify, manifest, express, conceptualize and, ultimately, re-present the ways they conceive of self, the places of their lives, including the art classroom, and community. These materialized in the forms of poetry, dramatizations, tableaux, and individual and collaborative art projects.

The advantage of the framework presented in this study is its potential to engage the personal and cultural domains of the students’ life worlds, and to locate these within local and global issues, to help them make sense of the world. An important finding of this research is

that this framework works across age groups. Both groups demonstrated the capacity to draw upon the places of their lives to engage with artmaking meaningfully. However, the Christchurch students, due to their more limited experience using art to investigate personal ideas, required extensive scaffolding. In this respect, I found that the introduction of exemplars supported by discussion that contextualized the artworks, and that helped students to identify the import these ideas had for their personal lives, served to enhance student conceptual capacities. With the teacher-trainees, these forms of experiences helped them to attend to the ways they personally interact with curriculum and thus promoted their sensitivity toward the impact and outcomes of curricular choices on students.

At the Kingston site, the fact that artmaking and its contingent expressivity were more familiar territory for the participants may have made it easier for them to be open to the strategies presented. Additionally, they were eager to access the added experience to strengthen their practicum experience. As one participant suggested, the more practical and adaptive orientation of the project as opposed to the more theoretically framed orientations that they were accustomed to, served as a motivating factor for their participation in the project.

The capacity to promote a sense of community through this framework was one of the more intriguing aspects of this work, though it was one of the more challenged aspects of this study. As discussed in Chapter Five, the envisioned community project did not materialize as anticipated. This variable might have been better realized by increased student ownership of the vision of the project. In future, consultation with those participating in the research might provide the means necessary to support the inclusion of members of the community.

Timing also arose as a related issue in this endeavor. Despite the more liberal timetabling of these classes, as compared with the timetables in secondary schools in Jamaica, the reality is that art programs operate within the structure of schools and are

therefore subject to interruptions by school events. Accordingly, allowance needs to be made for these shifts in advance. Timing also proved to be a critical factor in the Jamaican site but familiarity with the site and the context afforded more leverage to micro manage the outcomes. In the Christchurch context, it may have been more productive to ask the HOD to help mediate the process of negotiating the involvement of the parents in the endeavour.

The positive responses of the participants and the HODs across the sites indicated the efficacy and practicality of framing visual arts experiences in the dimensions presented in this study. One of the teacher-trainees' report that he had appropriated many of the strategies successfully in his practicum, as well as in a subsequent teaching experiences, provides an indication of its adaptability. However, as stated, the results are not generalizable, and therefore in adapting the framework and content, particular attention must be given to the suitability for the contexts for which it is appropriated.

The use of a/r/tography, as an arts-based methodology presented much potential for examining the complexities of the artmaking experience as described in this research. As an active enquirer in the study, it helped me to become more attuned toward enquiry and my ways of being in the world. Consequently, I was more aware of the ways in which the personal may be negotiated in a community of belonging, and how practices that address difference may be developed. The employment of this methodology and the outputs generated confirms the rigour and value of visual forms of 'knowing'.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The study of place has generated more currency in light of the effects of globalisation, and its effects on the ways that places are experienced, and thus reinforces an interest in the ways that places are "profoundly pedagogical" (Gruenewald, 2003b). Matters of self-determination, cultural diversity, and cultural relevance are implicated in these pedagogies

and, as such, this study's emphasis on notions of self, place and community could offer a model for researchers who are interested in exploring similar concerns, both in the geographic locations that centered the research as well as other international locations.

The community aspect of the project in the secondary school was not fully realized and so presents an area where this study could be extended to investigate art as a bridge to improve relations between schools and communities. Whilst the *Te Mauri Pakeaka*<sup>26</sup> project in New Zealand provided a good model of this, it might be useful to investigate how the process influenced the philosophies of the student participants, or informed any further such efforts.

Drawing upon the questions posed by the community participant in the Kingston collaborative project, it would be useful to conduct an empirical investigation into the ways that sensitive issues are navigated through the visual arts curriculum. Such an investigation could help teacher-trainees to prepare more realistically for their entry into the education system, especially since there continue to be challenges with translating theory into practice.

An investigation that draws upon a similar orientation to the one I have used, with two different locations, might also frame the project to support cross-cultural and possibly, inter-generational conversations amongst the participants. This could make a useful contribution to the field.

Finally, the literature supporting this research was mostly informed by international writings. Given the limited documentation of the history of secondary visual arts education in Jamaica, it would be worthwhile to conduct a narrative inquiry with past and present visual arts education officers to map this development and locate Jamaican visual arts education within the wider societal realities that have influenced, and continue to influence practice

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<sup>26</sup> Te Mauri Pakeaka was a community education program developed by Arnold Wilson in the 1970s in Northland, New Zealand, that brought together schools and communities onto the marae for the purpose of making art. Art in this context served as a catalyst for cultural exploration and as a means of developing shared values. (Greenwood & Wilson, 2006)

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there. Such historical awareness would provide invaluable support for more international and informed development moving forward.



### **Glossary**

Aotearoa- the land of the long white cloud; Māori name for New Zealand

A/r/tography- a form of arts-based methodology where the researcher's artist-and teacher-and-researcher roles are relational and educational phenomena is examined through an artistic understanding and inquiry process.

Decolonization- Learning to recognize disruption and injury and to address their causes.

Hongi- a traditional Māori greeting that serves a similar purpose as a formal handshake in Western societies. The act involves the pressing together of foreheads and noses by two individuals simultaneously at an encounter. During the hongi, the ha (or breath of life) is said to be exchanged.

Māori- Indigenous people of New Zealand

Pākehā- New Zealanders of European heritage

Patois- Native language of Jamaica

Reinhabitation- Learning to live-in-place in an area that has been disrupted and injured through past exploitation.

Whakatuki- proverb

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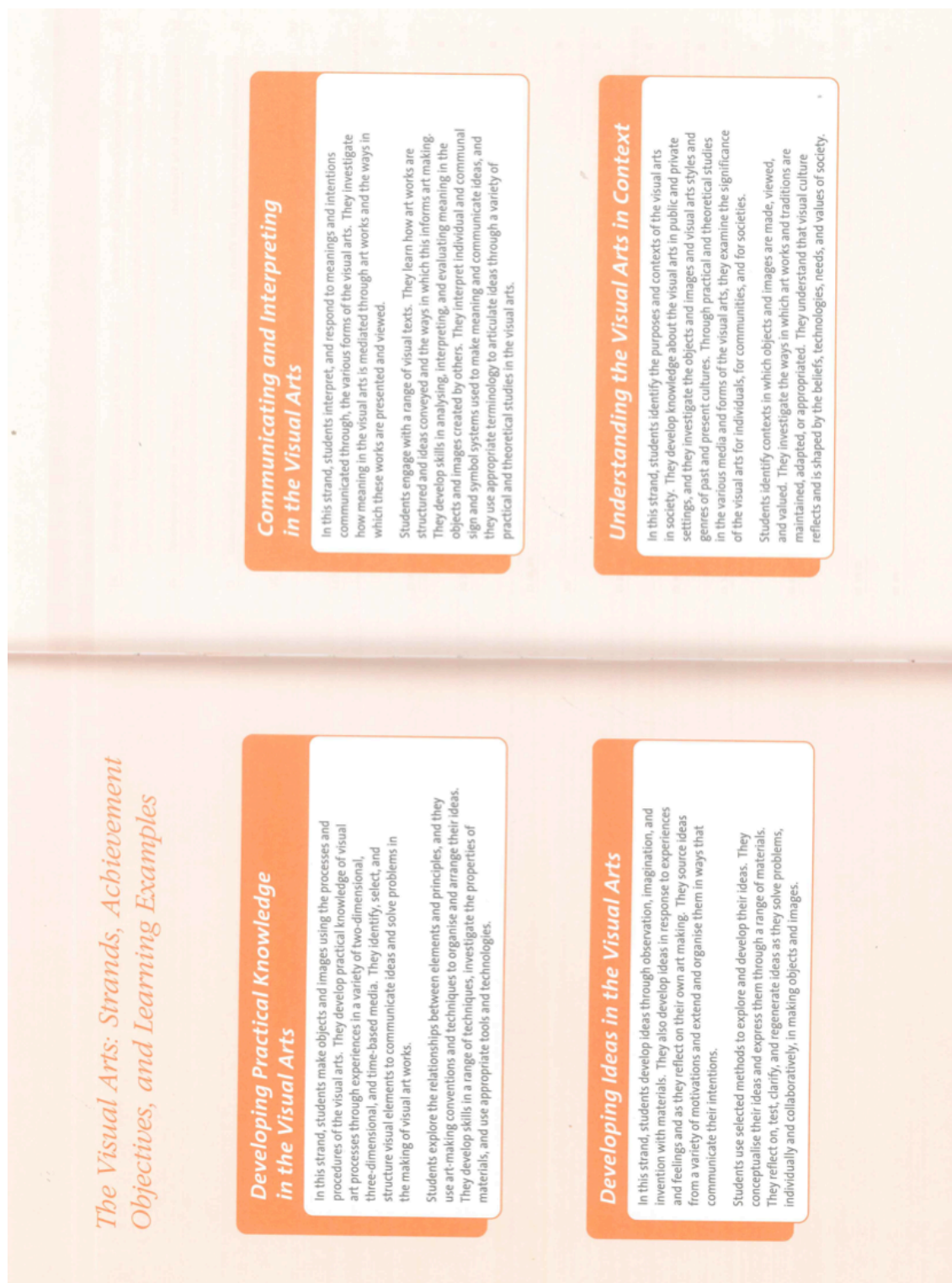
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Re-MARKING PLACES

## **Appendices**



Appendix 1 Visual Arts Strands in the New Zealand Curriculum

## Information Sheet for Principal of Secondary School

### Re: Re-Marking Places: Theorizing a Critical Pedagogy of Place for Visual Arts Education

Dear XXX,

I am a PhD candidate at the College of Education, University of Canterbury, under the supervision of Professor Janinka Greenwood and Dr. Richard Manning. I have taught the visual arts at the secondary and tertiary levels in Jamaica and I am currently interested in exploring artmaking strategies that will help adolescent students to develop their senses of place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. My research will involve parallel studies in New Zealand and Jamaican schools.

I am writing to you to request your permission and support for me to carry out my research at your institution. I would like to invite the visual arts teacher at your school and ten students, suggested by you, whom you feel would contribute meaningfully, to participate in this study. The study involves a series of visual art workshops that seeks to explore appropriate artmaking strategies that visual arts teachers may use to help their students to recognize, critically analyze and interpret their senses of place. It is hoped that a series of recommendations will be developed out of the study to help improve visual arts education programmes.

The following will be required of the participants:

- Participate in a series of visual arts workshops that are videotaped.
- Keep visual/verbal diaries of their artworks and reflections.
- Share their understandings from the workshops in group interviews involving their classmates.
- Interview an outstanding member of the local community.
- Partake in a group art project involving members of their art class and the local community.
- Participate in an art exhibition that showcases the group art project.
- Upload their artworks and reflections to a website specifically created for the workshops.

Please note that the participation of members of your institution in this study is voluntary. Should they decide to participate, they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

I can assure you that this research will be conducted in strict accordance with the code of ethics developed by the Education Research Human Ethics Committee of the University of Canterbury. The participants and parents of minors will be asked for their informed consent and will be advised in writing of any inconveniences that participation may involve, such as working collaboratively with peers and members of the local community. As such, complete anonymity may not be guaranteed as participants will work collaboratively on art projects and participate in group interviews.

## Re-MARKING PLACES

However, potential risks pertaining to information disclosure from the sessions will be managed by asking participants to sign a confidentiality form. Additionally, to mitigate any risks with working with community members, individuals identified by the students will have to be approved by parents and the school. I will also oversee the collaborative art project, advising or intervening where necessary to negotiate its suitability with all parties involved.

Although the research has a website component, I will take particular care to ensure that the site is password protected and that data uploaded to the site may only be accessed by the participants and myself. Raw data will be kept in locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study, after which time it will be destroyed.

On completion of the study, a report summarizing the research findings and recommendations will be presented to you and each participant. Though the results will be reported internationally at conferences and in Art Education journals, neither the participants nor your institution will be named.

Please contact me at the email or telephone number provided above with any questions pertaining to the study. Should you have a complaint about the study, you may contact the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz).

Should you decide to support this study, I would appreciate your expressed permission on the attached consent form to formally approach the visual arts teacher and to consult you further regarding potential student participants. I would also be very happy to follow up this letter with a discussion in person or by phone.

Thank you for considering this request. I look forward to working with you.

Regards,

Trudy-Ann Barrett

**Re-Marking Places:**  
**Theorizing a Critical Pedagogy of Place Framework for Visual Arts Education**

**Consent Form for Principals**

I have been given a full explanation of this project and have been provided the opportunity to ask questions pertaining to it.

I understand what will be required of my school if I agree to participate in this project.

I understand that the teacher and students' participation in this project is voluntary and that withdrawal at any stage without penalty is possible.

I understand that any information or opinions that members of the school provide will be treated confidentially by the researcher and that any published or reported results will not identify the school or the participants by name.

I understand that the participation of community members in this project is dependent on the approval of the parents whose children are involved with this project as well as the school's.

I understand that the researcher will oversee the collaborative art project, advising or intervening where necessary to negotiate its suitability with all parties involved.

I understand that the methods used for data collection will be in strict accordance with the code of ethics developed by the Education Research Human Ethics Committee of the University of Canterbury.

I understand that all data collected for this study will be managed securely through password protected or locked facilities at the University of Canterbury and will be destroyed after five years.

I understand that I will receive a report on the findings of this study. I have provided my email details below for this.

I understand that if I require further information I may contact the researcher, Trudy-Ann Barrett.

I understand that if I have any complaints, I may contact the Chair of the University of

## Re-MARKING PLACES

Canterbury, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

By signing below, I agree for members of the school to participate in this research project based on the understandings above.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

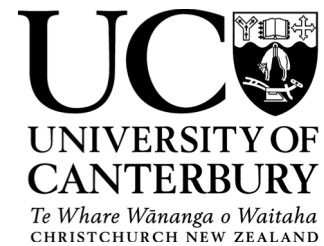
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please return this completed consent form to Trudy-Ann Barrett in the envelope provided.***

Telephone: +64 2102870586

Email: trudy-ann.barrett@pg.canterbury.ac.nz



## **Information Letter for Head of Department at Tertiary Institution**

### **Re: Re-Marking Places: Theorizing a Critical Pedagogy of Place for Visual Arts Education**

Dear XXX,

I am writing to follow up on our informal conversation regarding permission and support for me to undertake research with teacher trainees within your department. As you know, I'm currently a PhD candidate at the College of Education, University of Canterbury, under the supervision of Professor Janinka Greenwood and Dr. Richard Manning. My research interests center around the exploration of artmaking strategies that will help adolescent students to develop their senses of place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This will involve parallel studies in New Zealand and Jamaica to broaden the discourse.

The research will involve a series of visual arts workshops over a two weeks period. The workshops will draw upon artmaking strategies currently being explored with a group of year nine students at a secondary school in New Zealand. I would like to trial some of these strategies with the teachers in training at your institution to gauge their usefulness within the Jamaican context and to develop a range of strategies that visual arts teachers may use to help their students to recognize, critically analyze and interpret their senses of place. It is hoped that a series of recommendations will be developed out of these workshops to help improve visual arts education programmes at the secondary level of the Jamaican education system.

The participants will be asked to do the following:

- Participate in a series of visual arts workshops that are videotaped.
- Keep visual/verbal diaries of their artworks and reflections.
- Share their understandings from the workshops in group interviews involving their peers.
- Interview an outstanding member of the local community.
- Partake in a group art project involving other workshop participants and members of their local community.
- Participate in an art exhibition that showcases the group art project.

Please note that the participation of members of your institution in this study is voluntary. Should they decide to participate, they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

I can assure you that this research will be conducted in strict accordance with the code of ethics developed by the Education Research Human Ethics Committee of the University of Canterbury. The participants will be asked for their informed consent and will be advised in writing of any inconveniences that participation may involve, such as working collaboratively with peers and members of the local community. As such, complete anonymity may not be guaranteed as participants will work collaboratively on art projects and participate in group interviews.



## Re-MARKING PLACES

However, potential risks pertaining to the disclosure of information from the sessions will be managed by asking participants to sign a confidentiality form. I will also oversee the collaborative art project, advising or intervening where necessary to negotiate its suitability with all parties involved.

The raw data from the workshops will be kept in locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study, after which time it will be destroyed.

On completion of the research, a report summarizing its findings and recommendations will be presented to you and each participant. Though the results will be reported internationally at conferences and in Art Education journals, neither the participants nor your institution will be named.

Please contact me at the email or telephone number provided above with any questions pertaining to the research. Should you have a complaint about the study, you may contact the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch ([human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)).

Should you decide to support this study, I would appreciate your expressed permission on the attached consent form. I would also like to consult you further regarding the potential participants and the logistics of hosting the workshops at the College in January, 2013. I am also very keen to follow up this letter with a discussion by email or by phone.

Thank you for considering this request. I look forward to working with you.

Regards,

Trudy-Ann Barrett

Telephone: +64 021 0287 0586

Email: [trudy-ann.barrett@pg.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:trudy-ann.barrett@pg.canterbury.ac.nz)



**Re-Marking Places:**  
**Theorizing a Critical Pedagogy of Place Framework for Visual Arts Education**

**Consent Form for Head of Department**

I have been given a full explanation of this project and have been provided the opportunity to ask questions pertaining to it.

I understand what will be required of members of my department if I agree to their participation in this project.

I understand that the students' participation in this project is voluntary and that withdrawal at any stage without penalty is possible.

I understand that any information or opinions that the participants provide will be treated confidentially by the researcher and that any published or reported results will not identify the school or the participants by name.

I understand that the researcher will oversee the collaborative art project, advising or intervening where necessary to negotiate its suitability with all parties involved.

I understand that the methods used for data collection will be in strict accordance with the code of ethics developed by the Education Research Human Ethics Committee of the University of Canterbury.

I understand that all data collected for this study will be managed securely in locked facilities at the University of Canterbury and will be destroyed after five years.

I understand that I will receive a report on the findings of this study. I have provided my email details below for this.

I understand that if I require further information I may contact the researcher, Trudy-Ann Barrett.

I understand that if I have any complaints, I may contact the Chair of the University of

## Re-MARKING PLACES

Canterbury, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

By signing below, I agree for members of my department to participate in this research project based on the understandings above.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please return this completed consent form to Trudy-Ann Barrett at the email address provided.***

Telephone: +64 021-0287-0586  
Email: trudy-ann.barrett@pg.canterbury.ac.nz  
June 26, 2012



**Re-Marking Places:  
Theorizing a Critical Pedagogy of Place Framework for Visual Arts Education**

**Information Sheet for Parents/Guardians**

I am a PhD candidate at the College of Education, University of Canterbury, under the supervision of Professor Janinka Greenwood and Dr. Richard Manning. I have taught the visual arts at the secondary and tertiary levels of the education system in Jamaica and I am currently interested in exploring artmaking strategies that will help adolescent students to develop their senses of place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. My research will be carried out in New Zealand and Jamaica.

I would like to invite your child to participate in my present study. If you agree for him/her to take part in the study, he/she will be asked to do the following:

- Participate in a series of visual arts workshops that are videotaped.
- Keep visual/verbal diaries of their artworks and reflections.
- Share their understandings from the workshops in group interviews involving your classmates.
- Interview an outstanding member of their community.
- Partake in an art project involving members of their art class and their local community.
- Participate in an art exhibition that showcases the collaborative art project.
- Upload their artworks and reflections to a website created specifically for the workshop to allow for shared understandings amongst their peers as well as with students from Jamaica who will participate in similar visual arts workshops.

Although the student's interview and collaboration with a community member could be seen as a potential risk, this will be mitigated with your and the school's approval of this individual prior to his/her participation in the project. The collaborative art project will also be overseen by me, with advising or intervening between the parties where necessary to monitor its progress and ensure its suitability.

Please note that the basis on which your child participates in this study is voluntary. If he/she participates in the study, he/she has the right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

I will take particular care to ensure that your child's identity by name is not disclosed when the findings are published. To protect other participants in the project, your child will be asked to sign a confidentiality statement, agreeing to treat the information they disclose confidentially. Great care will also be taken to keep the data secure by storing it in password protected facilities and locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study. It will then be destroyed.

## Re-MARKING PLACES

The results of this research may be used to revise and improve visual arts education programmes.

The results will also be reported internationally at conferences and in Art Education journals. All participants will receive a report on the study.

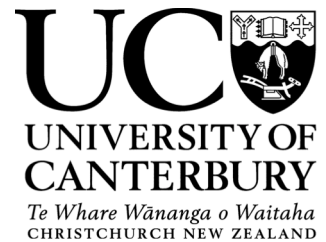
If you have any questions about the study, please contact me at the email address or telephone number provided. If you have a complaint about the study, you may contact the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch ([human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)).

If you agree for your child to participate in this study, please complete the attached consent form and return it to me by July 30, 2012.

I look forward to working with your child. Thanks in advance for your contributions.

Trudy-Ann Barrett

Telephone: +64 02102870586  
Email: [trudy-ann.barrett@pg.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:trudy-ann.barrett@pg.canterbury.ac.nz)



**Re-Marking Places:  
Theorizing a Critical Pedagogy of Place Framework for Visual Arts Education**

**Consent Form for Parents/Guardians**

I have been given a full explanation of this project and have been given an opportunity to ask questions.

I understand what will be required of my child if he/she takes part in this project.

I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that he/she may withdraw at any stage without penalty.

I understand that any information or opinions my child provides will be kept confidential by the researcher and that any published or reported results will not identify him/her.

I understand that my child will be required to sign a confidentiality statement to protect the information shared by other participants in the study.

I understand that the selection of a community member for this project will be dependent on my and the school's approval.

I understand that the researcher will oversee the project, advising or intervening where necessary to negotiate its suitability with all parties involved.

I understand that the methods used for data collection will be in strict accordance with the code of ethics developed by the Education Research Human Ethics Committee of the University of Canterbury.

I understand that all data collected for this study will be kept in locked and secure facilities at the University of Canterbury and will be destroyed after five years.

I understand that I will receive a report on the findings of this study. I have provided my email details below for this.

I understand that if I require further information I may contact the researcher, Trudy-Ann Barrett. If I have any complaints, I can contact Nicola Surtees, the Chair of the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.

## Re-MARKING PLACES

By signing below, I agree for my child to participate in this research project based on the understandings above.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please return this completed consent form to Trudy-Ann Barrett by July 30, 2011.***

**Re-Marking Places:**

**Theorizing a Critical Pedagogy of Place Framework for Visual Arts Education  
Information Sheet for Students**

My name is Trudy-Ann Barrett and I am a PhD student at the College of Education, University of Canterbury. I have taught the visual arts in secondary schools and I have trained teachers to teach the subject, also at the secondary level, in Jamaica.

I would like to work with you on my research project. It seeks to find out how art teachers may use artmaking to help students in New Zealand and Jamaica, to develop their senses of place in today's society.

If you agree to take part in my research project, you will be asked to do the following:

- Participate in a series of visual arts workshops that are videotaped.
- Keep visual/verbal diaries of your artworks and reflections.
- Share your understandings from the workshops in group interviews involving your classmates.
- Interview an outstanding member of your community.
- Partake in a group art project involving members of your artclass and the member of your local community whom you interviewed.
- Participate in an art exhibition that showcases the group art project.
- Upload your artworks and reflections to a website specifically created for the workshops.

Please note that your participation in this study is voluntary. You may change your mind about participating in its activities if they make you uncomfortable. Your parents have also been asked to give their consent before you participate in the study. Your parents' and the school's consent is also required for the community member whom you choose to interview and work with, to participate in the project.

To ensure that your identity is protected, neither your name nor your school's name will be included in any publication of the findings. Any information you supply will be kept in secure facilities at the University of Canterbury that are either locked or require my password for access. However, I cannot guarantee that your identity will be completely concealed since you will be known to everyone who participates in the study. To protect information you share, you and all other participants will be asked to sign a confidentiality form stating that you will not disclose information about the other participants.

The results of the study will be used to improve visual arts education programmes. You will receive a report of the findings.

Feel free to ask me about any questions you may have about the study at the email address above. If you have complaints, you may contact the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury at [human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz) or at the address below.



## Re-MARKING PLACES

If you agree to participate in this study, please complete the attached consent form. Please also ask your parents to complete the Parents consent form attached and return these to me in the envelope provided by July 30, 2012.

Thank you for your interest in the project. I look forward to working with you to discover new strategies for making the artmaking process more interesting and meaningful for students your age.

Trudy-Ann Barrett

**College of Education**

Trudy-Ann Barrett

University of Canterbury

Dovedale Avenue

Ph. 02102870586

Email: trudy-ann.barrett@pg.canterbury.ac.nz



**Re-Marking Places:  
Theorizing a Critical Pedagogy of Place Framework for Visual Arts Education**

**Consent Form for Students**

- I have read the information sheet and understand what will be required of me if I take part in this project.
- I understand that the visual arts workshops will be video-taped.
- I understand that I am asked to keep visual and verbal diaries of my artworks and reflections.
- I am aware that my understandings from the workshops will be collected by means of group interviews that involve my classmates.
- I understand I will be asked to sign a confidentiality statement to protect the information shared by other participants in this research.
- I understand that I will be asked to interview an outstanding member of my community and that his/her participation is dependent on my parents' and schools' approval.
- I understand that I am expected to participate in a group art project that involves members of my class and the local community.
- I understand that the project has a website component and that my artworks and reflections will be accessible to other members of this workshop through this means.
- I understand that my participation in the project is voluntary and that I may choose to withdraw from it at any time.
- I understand that I will not be identified by name in any presentations or publications that mention this research.
- I understand that the information collected will only be accessed by the researcher and that it will be kept confidential and secure.
- I understand that I can receive a report on the findings of the study. I have written my email address below for the report to be sent to.

## Re-MARKING PLACES

- I understand that I can get more information about this project from the researcher, and that I may contact the University of Canterbury Educational Research Ethics Committee if I have any complaints about the research.
- I agree to participate in this research and my parents have also given approval on their consent form.

### Statement of Confidentiality

I \_\_\_\_\_ (*full name*) hereby agree to participate in group interviews recorded by Trudy-Ann Barrett for her PhD research project. I promise to respect the other participants' views and to ensure that any personal information they share during the interview process will remain confidential during and after the research process has been completed.

Full name (student) \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

Class Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Email address for report \_\_\_\_\_

***Please return this consent form to your class teacher.***

## Re-MARKING PLACES

Trudy-Ann Barrett  
College of Education  
University of Canterbury  
Dovedale Avenue  
Ph. 02102870586  
Email: trudy-ann.barrett@pg.canterbury.ac.nz



### **Re-Marking Places: Theorizing a Critical Pedagogy of Place Framework for Visual Arts Education**

#### **Consent Form for Teacher-Trainees**

- I have read the information sheet and understand what will be required of me if I take part in this project.
- I understand that the visual arts workshops will be video-taped.
- I understand that I am asked to keep visual and verbal diaries of my artworks and reflections.
- I am aware that my understandings from the workshops will be collected by means of group interviews that involve my classmates.
- I understand I will be asked to sign a confidentiality statement to protect the information shared by other participants in this research.
- I understand that I will be asked to interview an outstanding member of my community and that his/her participation is dependent on my institution's approval.
- I understand that I am expected to participate in a group art project that involves members of my class and the local community.
- I understand that my participation in the project is voluntary and that I may choose to withdraw from it at any time.
- I understand that the results from this project will be reported at conferences and in published materials but that neither my name nor the institution's name will be mentioned in these outputs.

## Re-MARKING PLACES

- I understand that the information collected will only be accessed by the researcher and that it will be kept confidential and secure.
  - I understand that I can receive a report on the findings of the study. I have written my email address below for the report to be sent to.
  - I understand that I can get more information about this project from the researcher, and that I may contact the University of Canterbury Educational Research Ethics Committee if I have any complaints about the research.
  - I agree to participate in this research and have declared this on the consent form attached.
- 

### Statement of Confidentiality

I \_\_\_\_\_ (*full name*) hereby agree to participate in group interviews recorded by Trudy-Ann Barrett for her PhD research project. I promise to respect the other participants' views and to ensure that any personal information they share during the interview process will remain confidential during and after the research process has been completed.

Full name (student-teacher) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Email address for report \_\_\_\_\_

***Please return this consent form to your Head of Department.***

## Appendix 10 Consent Form for Teacher-Trainees

**Re-Marking Places:**

**Theorizing a Critical Pedagogy of Place Framework for Visual Arts Education**

**Information Sheet for Community Members**

I am a PhD candidate at the College of Education, University of Canterbury, under the supervision of Professor Janinka Greenwood and Dr. Richard Manning. I have taught the visual arts at the secondary and tertiary levels of the education system in Jamaica and I am currently interested in exploring artmaking strategies that will help adolescent students to develop their senses of place and identity in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. My research will be carried out in New Zealand and Jamaica.

I would like to invite you to participate in my present study. If you agree to take part in the study, you will be asked to do the following:

- Participate in an interview with a student associated with this project. The aim of the interview is to understand the role of place (community) in shaping your personal identity.
- Partake in a collaborative art project with the student who interviewed you, their classmates and other members of the local community, aimed at celebrating the school/community partnership.
- Participate in an art exhibition that showcases the collaborative art project.

The proposed date for the collaborative art project is December \_\_, 2012. Although your initial selection for participation in the project will be based on the student's identification of you as an outstanding community member, parents' and the school's approval of you will also be taken into account to confirm your participation. Your and all parties' involvement in the collaborative art project will be overseen by me, with advising or intervening where necessary to monitor the progress of the project and ensure its suitability.

Please note that the basis on which you participate in this study is voluntary. Should you agree to participate in the study, you have the right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

I will take particular care to ensure that your identity by name is not disclosed when the findings of the study are published. To protect other participants in the project, you will be asked to agree to treat the information disclosed by the other participants confidentially. Great care will also be taken to keep the data arising from the project secure by storing it in password protected facilities and locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study. It will then be destroyed.

The results of this research may be used to revise and improve visual arts education programmes.

The results will also be reported internationally at conferences and in Art Education journals. All participants will receive a report on the study when it is concluded.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact me at the email address or telephone number provided. If you have a complaint about the study, you may contact the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch ([human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)).

## Re-MARKING PLACES

If you agree to participate in this study, please complete the attached consent form and return it to the student who will interview you by December 3, 2012.

I look forward to working with you. Thanks in advance for your contributions.

Trudy-Ann Barrett

**Re-Marking Places:**  
**Theorizing a Critical Pedagogy of Place Framework for Visual Arts Education**

**Consent Form for Community Members**

I have been given a full explanation of this project and have been provided the opportunity to ask questions pertaining to it.

I understand what will be required of me if I agree to participate in this project.

I understand that my participation in this project is voluntary and that withdrawal at any stage without penalty is possible.

I understand that my participation in this project is also dependent on the approval of the parents of the child who will interview me and the school he/she attends.

I understand that any information or opinions that I provide will be treated confidentially by the researcher and that any published or reported results will not identify me by name.

I understand that I am expected to treat information provided by other participants in this study respectfully and confidentially.

I understand that the methods used for data collection will be in strict accordance with the code of ethics developed by the Education Research Human Ethics Committee of the University of Canterbury

I understand that all data collected for this study will be managed securely through password protected or locked facilities at the University of Canterbury and will be destroyed after five years.

I understand that I will receive a report on the findings of this study. I have provided my email details below for this.

I understand that if I require further information I may contact the researcher, Trudy-Ann Barrett.

I understand that if I have any complaints, I may contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee.



## Re-MARKING PLACES

By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project based on the understandings above.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

***Please return this completed consent form to Trudy-Ann Barrett by XXX.***

I/we agree for the above named person to be interviewed by my child and to work with them on a collaborative art project.

Name/s: \_\_\_\_\_|\_\_\_\_\_

Signature/s: \_\_\_\_\_|\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_|\_\_\_\_\_

The school agrees to the above named person's participation in this collaborative art project.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 12 Consent Form for Community Members

YEAR 9 HOMEWORK TASK

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_

DUE DATE: August 16, 2012

For this homework activity, you are asked to reflect on what you have learned and done in artclass so far. Answer the following questions.

1. What is contemporary art?

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2. Name three contemporary artists.

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3. What are some of the issues that contemporary artists address in their works?

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The remaining questions relate to your papercut artwork.

What media (materials/tools) did **you** use to create the artwork?

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Describe the subject matter.

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4. What ideas were **you** trying to communicate through **your** artwork?

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5. Do you think **your** artwork is successful? Give a reason for **your** answer.

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## Re-MARKING PLACES

6. Did **you** enjoy the papercut activity? If yes, say what **you** liked about it.

7. What aspect of this activity do **you** think could be improved?